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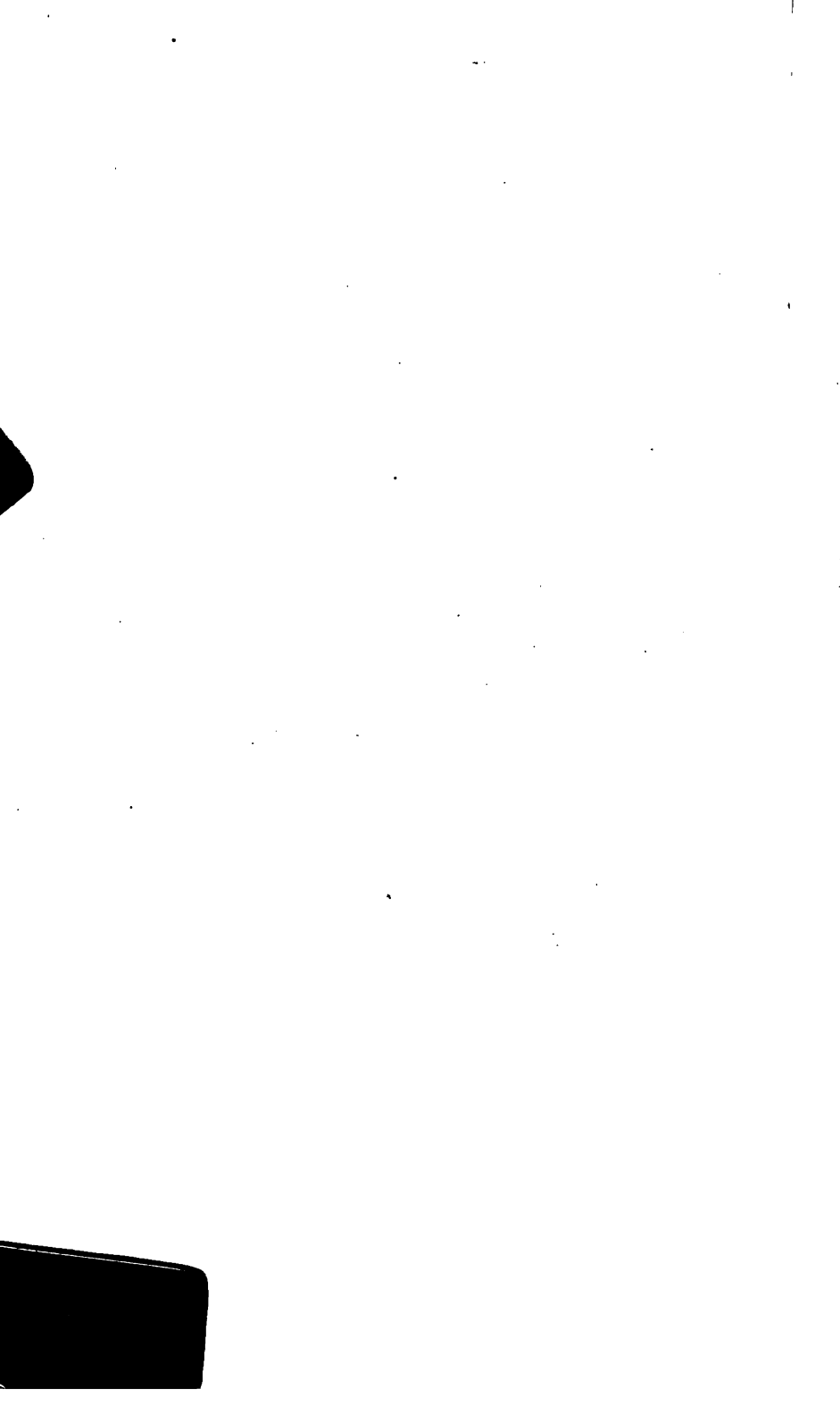
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DE  
IVERNOIS









HISTORICAL  
AND  
POLITICAL SURVEY  
OF THE  
LOSSES

SUSTAINED BY THE  
FRENCH NATION,  
IN  
POPULATION, AGRICULTURE, COLONIES,  
MANUFACTURES, AND COMMERCE,  
IN CONSEQUENCE OF  
THE REVOLUTION AND THE PRESENT WAR.

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FROM THE FRENCH OF  
SIR FRANCIS D'IVERNOIS.

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TO WHICH IS ADDED,  
A SUPPLEMENT.

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*Les ressources de la République sont entières.*

*Message of the Directory, 19th June 1797.*

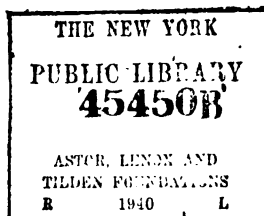
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LONDON:  
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JUNE 1799.

*M. Sm. Ivernois*

1. France - Hist. - Revolution - Eco aspect.
2. Finance - France, 1799
3. Economic history - France  
ED 1789-191



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## INTRODUCTION.

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London, 1st March 1799.

**T**HOUGH I had intended annually to resume my examination of the financial operations of the French government; yet as the revenues of that nation are now chiefly supplied by the spoliation of their allies, and as the history of their finances is more and more identified with that of their armies, I have relinquished an undertaking too intimately connected with subjects that are beyond my sphere.

Among the papers, however, which I had already collected, was one which contained an assertion that appeared to deserve a very close investigation; I mean the message wherein the Directory declared, that *their resources are entire*. The more I considered that assertion, the more I was convinced that on its truth or falsehood the fate of Europe depends, and that a true picture of the present state of France, displaying her daily increasing impoverishment, might afford matter for a more useful and instructive work, than a tedious catalogue of the swindling expedients of her go-

vernment. It appeared to me that an impartial and accurate analysis of her internal resources might contribute to dispel the dangerous delusion which represents her multiplied successes as resulting from a superiority in real and durable strength, as well as to open the eyes of those nations who do not yet perceive, that, by pursuing her steps, they condemn themselves to all the dreadful calamities of universal wretchedness and misery.

During my progress it often happened that I received interesting documents, which should have been inserted in one of the chapters already finished and sent to press. Hence I have been obliged to throw into the notes many articles whose importance would have entitled them to a place in the text. Had I determined to introduce them according to a more methodical arrangement, and for that purpose to re-model my work, or had I made a point of giving it that perfect regularity of disposition, in which it is now deficient, I am well aware, that, as a literary production, it would have been less exposed to criticism: but I am aware also, that in the mean while the grand crisis which will decide between the civilization or barbarism of our species, is rapidly advancing.

The present work, however, assumes no higher character than that of a faithful collection of ma-

terials for some future historian of the French revolution\*; and my whole object is gained, if these open an extensive field for the contemplation of statesmen. To them, and more especially to the ministers of neutral powers, I submit the following facts, which, though too little known or attended to, sufficiently demonstrate, that the deplorable inactivity of the northern powers will sooner or later subject them to the same fate that is now falling on the nations of the south.

But as it is not till towards the conclusion that this awful truth is fully displayed, it may be proper to give a short statement of the whole train and analysis of the propositions whence so important an inference is deduced: namely,

That the depreciation of the paper circulation, the confiscation and sequestration of property, the law of the *maximum*, the requisitions, and the forced loans, combined with the various evils and expenses of the war, have radically and completely exhausted the resources of France; that she has sacrificed the flower of her population; that her agriculture has fallen into decay, and that the people having lost both the habit

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\* All the quotations for which no authority is expressly named, are extracted from the *Moniteur*, which may be considered as the archives of revolutionized France, that paper alone containing the debates of the two Councils, the official reports of the committees, and the circular letters of the ministers.

A comparison of these extracts with the originals will prove that I have adhered to the latter with the most scrupulous fidelity.



and the means of productive industry, their taxable incomes are reduced to one third of their former amount.

That the ordinary national revenue is diminished in the same proportion, while the new form of government is twice as expensive as the old.

That the oppressors of that nation can only restrain the despair of the people by coercion ; and that they are already in the same situation as the Roman empire during the expiring convulsions of dissolution, when, as Montesquieu observes, it could subsist neither with nor without its prætorian bands.

That under the twofold impossibility of either disbanding or paying their troops, foreign invasion is become their only preservative against a civil war, as well as the very aliment of their existence ; and that to ratify a general peace, would be to pass sentence of death upon themselves.

That if the Directory were not instinctively impelled to war and destruction, they would be irresistibly hurried on in the same career, by the inevitable necessity of filling up the deficit of their revenues with the plunder of surrounding nations ; and that not only the produce of military spoliations is necessary for new military achievements, but their internal poverty is such,

that they can henceforth exist at home only by the produce of the rapacity they exercise abroad.

That all their policy now consists in imitating that of ancient Rome, namely, engaging only in partial wars, by securing the neutrality of their more powerful neighbours, while they are crushing and plundering the weaker.

That by the effects of this policy those powers are enfeebled, while France appears comparatively strong, and will be able to attack and destroy all the other governments of Europe in succession, unless they once more unite around a common standard for their mutual protection.

That peace is no longer practicable, except on a footing which shall compel that nation of plunderers, whose element is war, to restore all their conquests; and thus secure a return even of their own happiness, by forcing them to quit the career of hostile pillage and territorial aggrandizement, for the peaceful arts of productive labour.

That nothing but a complete restitution of those provinces which the German princes seem disposed to abandon, can prevent the Empire from falling under the same military despotism, the same general impoverishment, and the same state of moral and political degradation and barbarism, in which the republican ravagers of France have plunged that once happy and prosperous kingdom.

That the necessity of renewing the war is in proportion to the importance of peace, and to that of saving modern Europe from an equally humiliating and much more destructive yoke than was formerly imposed on the civilized world by the Goths and Vandals.

That since the extinction of the assignats, the Directory are unable to continue the struggle with their own resources; and as the ruin of the armies of the republic must be the consequence of the inability to maintain them, the surest means of accomplishing that ruin, is to oppose them with such military exertions as will be adequate to restrain their further progress, and prevent them from subsisting any longer by plunder.

And lastly, that the Deliverance of Europe is infallible, if *all* unite in such sacrifices as are proportioned to the alarming danger with which *all* are menaced; and not only resume their arms, but solemnly engage never to lay them down, till France is once more compelled to retire within her ancient frontiers.

Such is the series of propositions which I have endeavoured to illustrate and establish in the following pages: and as they appear to me founded in the utmost degree of moral certainty and truth; as I have brought the financial history of revolutionized France down to the period when her grand fictitious resource is irrecoverably dried up,

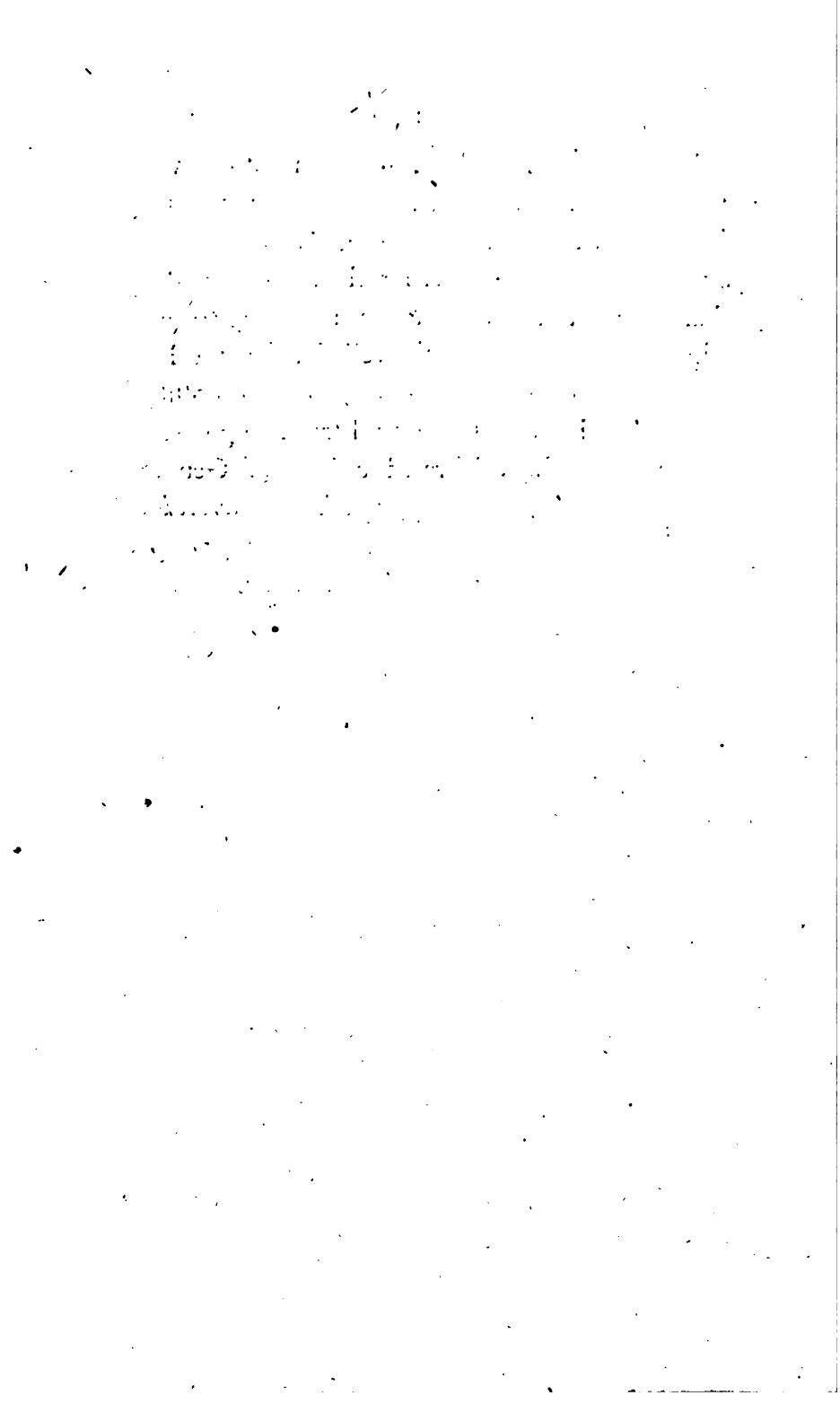
while the real resources that remain would be inadequate even to a peace establishment, if peace could ever coexist with such a government; as I flatter myself I have demonstrated, that the Directory can no longer subsist but on the spoil of surrounding nations; and as nothing more remains for me to add, on a subject which I have pursued through six successive publications, I now relinquish an undertaking to which I was at first led by the circumstances in which I was placed, and in which I have met such numerous opponents.

Some of these have indulged in the most extraordinary insinuations relative to the indefatigable perseverance with which I have incessantly repeated, ever since the year 1795, that the finances would ultimately prove the weakest and most vulnerable part of that military republic; that the only means of overturning it, are to unite against that nation of plunderers; and that their fall would be inevitable, were they once reduced to their own internal resources. Having, therefore, now brought this examination of those resources to a close, it will not be improper to declare, that one of the principal motives which inspired me with resolution, and gave me additional strength to undertake so laborious a work, was, that, having negotiated and signed the first treaty of peace ever concluded with the French republic,

and that treaty having been no sooner concluded than violated (of which act of perfidy the miseries of Geneva, and, to a certain degree, those of Switzerland, were the fatal consequences), I conceived, from my peculiar situation, that it was a sacred duty to conjure all other nations to distrust the more than Punic faith of the new pretended masters of the world.

Another motive concurred in strengthening my zeal. In one of the most instructive works that ever did honour to the human mind, Adam Smith, when treating of the causes of national wealth and prosperity, has demonstrated that these happy effects depend on the multiplication and improvement of productive labour. It appeared to me, that his train of arguments only required the illustration of corresponding facts to be brought within the reach of the most ordinary capacity ; that, from the effects of the French revolution, materials for an instructive work on *the causes* of the impoverishment of nations, might already be drawn ; and from its rapid changes, new data for the most important of sciences, that of the administration of governments and empires. Hitherto regenerated France is scarcely known but by her crimes ; we may now display the punishment with which these crimes are inevitably pursued ; we may now show the world with what unparalleled rapidity her citizens, once so

industrious and so rich, have fallen into poverty and barbarism, at the very period when they imagined they were acquiring *a colossal fortune* by robbing and plundering themselves, and by abandoning the arts of peace for the pillage of war. Thus we may tear away the veil that has too long covered the interior of France, and, if possible, throw new light on that grand truth so pointedly expressed by the celebrated citizen of Geneva: *No nations are so much oppressed, or so wretched, as nations of conquerors: even their successes but contribute to augment their miseries.*



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# ERRATA.

- Page 8, line 13, *for their, read, its*  
 11, — 1, *for Butt his, read, But this*  
 13, — 18, *for consequence—becomes, read, consequences—become*  
 15, — 22, *for retarded discovery, read, protracted distress*  
 31, — 15, *for political riches, read, national wealth*  
       ult. *for that ties, read, that lies*  
 43, — 7 of note, *for 6,000,000l. read, 9,000,000l.*  
 54, — 8 from bottom, *for establishing, read, re-establishing*  
 57, — 13, *for able to purchase, read, fit to possess*  
 60, — 11 from bottom, *for thirty, read, twenty-five*  
 76, — 4, *for unfounded, read, unhounded*  
 82, — 22 of note, *for golden, read, gilded*  
 97, — 13 from bottom, *for this, read, these*  
 102, — 25, *for Nor are all these investigations, read, All these investigations, however; and in line 26, for any longer, read, are no longer*  
       4 from bottom, *for more or less oppressive, read, more or less liberal*  
 118, — penult. *for oxen, read, own*  
 123, — 17, *for This, read, If, however, this*  
 130, — 18, *for their, read, such*  
 141, — 13, *for their, and themselves, read, his, and himself*  
       4 from bottom, *for the condition of their slaves, read, their condition*  
 145, — 9 from bottom, *for to, read, from*  
 151, — 18, *for In, read, It*  
 157, — 8, *for the Cape, read, Cape Français*  
 159, — 10, *for disorganization, read, vengeance*  
 162, — 15, *for every blessing, read, so many blessings*  
 174, — note, *for six millions, read, 600,000l.; and for sixteen millions, read, 1,600,000l.*  
 179, — 13, *for 1st April, read, 1st February*  
 185, — 9, *dele by; and line 15, for the home trade, read, all merchants*  
 188, — 25, *for is, read, was*  
 215, — 9 of the note, *for Pichegru, read, Pichegru's party*  
 241, — 17, *for her—her, read, their—their*  
 275, — 9 from bottom, *for though, read, as*  
 284, — 25, *after adopted, add, in France*  
 285, — 23, *for own riches, read, real capital*  
 307, — 1, *for political, read, fiscal*  
 312, — 22, *for 600, read, 240; and line 23, after land, insert, personal*  
 314, — 11, *for not here, read, here only*  
 315, — 11 from bottom, *after millions, read, in permanent taxes*  
 317, — 21, *for vii. read, vi.*  
 321, — 15, *dele who was*  
 323, — 9 from bottom, *for effects, read, domains*  
 343, — 10, *for was already prepared, read, already existed*  
 345, — 7, *after balconies, insert, coach gateways*  
 347, — 12, *for our finances, read, finance*  
 348, — 17, *for resources, read, efforts*  
 350, — 19, *dele, so*  
 365, — 5, *for emigrated families, read, families of emigrants; line 7, for them, read, those emigrants; and line 8, for children and heirs, read, parents or relations*  
 367, — 17, *dele of that cast*  
 368, — 17, *for four, read, five*  
 386, — 22, *for yes, read, yet*  
 414, — 12, *for Brissot, read, Briot*  
 418, — 15, *for to spill their blood, read, courage*  
 425, — 12 from bottom, *after resistance, add, being necessary*  
 442, — 2, *for and that, read, otherwise; line 3, dele should*  
 444, — 4 from bottom, *for These, read, The*  
 446, — 22, *for sums, read, sum; and line penult. after millions, read, in the amount of the specie expected to come in*

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# HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL SURVEY

OF THE

## LOSSES

SUSTAINED BY

### THE FRENCH NATION

IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE LATE REVOLUTION AND THE  
PRESENT WAR.

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#### CHAPTER I.

*The Sources from which the Riches of a Nation and the  
Revenue of its Government are derived.*

THE opulence of every state depends on the quantity of productive industry employed by its inhabitants for the supply of their ordinary wants, and to procure a surplus, of which they accumulate a part, while they devote the remainder to the public expenditure. Every nation that consumes its whole produce must live in continual inquietude and alarm, and an accidental disappointment would threaten them with the most dangerous calamities.

The relative power and riches of nations, therefore, evidently depend on the surplus of produce

which they set apart for extraordinary disbursements, and to augment, from year to year, their productive capitals. As the only sources of this surplus are Population, Agriculture, Colonies, Manufactures, and Commerce, I shall, under these five heads, examine the assertion of the Directory, that "*the resources of France are entire.*"

If we find her population decreasing, her agriculture decaying, her colonies conquered, or utterly ruined and thrown into confusion, her industry failing, and her commerce annihilated, it will evidently follow, that she neither creates nor possesses, at this time, that surplus which forms the basis of a durable prosperity: for her internal resources ought not to be confounded with the pillage she exercises on surrounding nations; proving at once the misery of the plunderers, and the cowardice of the plundered. Nations, like individuals, do not abandon themselves to such expedients, till they have lost all other hopes of subsisting with honour upon the produce of their labour, or the resources of their credit.

## CHAPTER II.

*The physical, political, and moral Causes of the present and future Depopulation of France.*

THE flourishing state of the population of France before the revolution is well known to the political world: the calculations most worthy of credit made it amount to twenty-five millions \* of inhabitants.

Whenever the present legislators have occasion to speak of the population of the republic, desirous of swelling its numbers both in the eyes of their countrymen and of other nations, they constantly refer to that computation, although made near twenty years ago; exactly as the Directory, in order to give a magnificent idea of the mass of specie in the republic, have amused themselves with publishing a register, not of the specie exported since the year 1789, but of the *grand total* of the bullion coined since 1726.

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\* That of M. Necker, which was the result of a laborious investigation, carried on under the Abbé Terray, makes the population of the kingdom amount to twenty-four millions eight hundred thousand, including that of Corsica. In the course of the following work I shall have frequent occasion to quote the calculations of that minister; not that I believe all of them to be perfectly accurate, but because we may consider them as those which approximate nearest to the truth; inasmuch as he was guarding against all spirit of system, collected many facts which he carefully compared, and had more certain data to proceed on than any of the writers on the internal administration of France.

From all I have been able to collect, either from acknowledged facts or conjectural computation, I am led to believe the besom of the revolution, and that of the war it has generated, have swept away between two and three millions of Frenchmen. It is true, I am not possessed of the documents and official papers necessary to demonstrate this result; but it may not, perhaps, be impossible to supply the place of those which are suppressed, by comparing certain established principles, and certain well-known facts, with those accidental traits which have from time to time escaped in that very assembly, whose object is to throw an impenetrable veil over the depopulation of their country.

It is a long-established maxim among the best-informed military officers, that in the course of a campaign an army loses one third of the number with which it took the field; and that a greater proportion of these fall by sickness than in battle. If such were the fact in France under the former government, which was more careful of the lives of its subjects, and at a period when winter campaigns were uncommon, when intemperance, debauchery, and irregularity were repressed, and when the military hospitals were well regulated and plentifully supplied, how much greater a proportion of soldiers must have perished during this revolutionary war, in which they have so often been destitute of clothing, of medicines, and even of bread! The authentic accounts of the destruction of Bournonville's first army, published at the time, are well known, as is the message of the

Directory three years afterwards, complaining of being *forced to refuse the sick in the army the aliments necessary for the recovery of their health.*

The maxim above laid down being admitted, the following facts, which may now be considered as established, may be adduced in further support of it. 1st. That the second and third campaigns, those of 1793 and 1794, have been more destructive than any of those commemorated in modern history. 2d. That in the beginning of 1795 the armies of the republic were increased, not to 1,400,000 effective men, as several committees declared, but to 1,200,000, including the servants who had the care of the baggage, and the persons employed in provisioning the army and driving the teams. 3d. That in October 1797, the minister of war certified, that the total of this immense army was 528,007 men. 4th. That on the 1st of July 1798, Villers, in his report, speaks but of 400,000 men under the banners of the republic.

If we admit this report as accurate, although I believe it to be exaggerated, at least by one fourth of the amount, it would appear that just one third of the 1,200,000 men, of which the armies consisted in the spring of 1795, at that time survived. This is a much larger proportion than might be expected after three campaigns and a half; but we must not forget, that during that interval there had been immense recruitments; for Dumas asserted, *that the national guards had thrice renewed the battalions of the defenders of their country*; and the authority of so well-informed an officer, to whom this investigation was particularly committed, must here have very great weight.



This triple renewal of the armies becomes still more probable, when we reflect with what carelessness and profusion the French generals sacrificed their troops in the first campaigns, especially in those of La Vendée. The losses of that war were long concealed, and C. Jourdan has, I believe, alone stated their amount, by declaring that it cost the lives of *five hundred thousand Frenchmen*. It is evident, from his manner of speaking, that he includes both royalists and republicans. Now, as none of his opponents who attacked his report made any objection to this passage, we may with the more confidence admit his statement as approximating to the truth, especially as Goupilleau and Dubois, who have spoken after him, inform us, that the population of the four departments beyond the Loire amounted to 800,000, and is *diminished by nearly one half*.

Long before the termination of the war in La Vendée, and towards the end of the year 1794, an official register was published, in which the losses of the first campaigns were computed at 800,000 republicans, including those who died in the military hospitals, and 70,000 taken prisoners. This estimate is confirmed by the particular calculations made in Germany, from which it results, that in October 1795 the war had already cost France more than a million of men. We must now add to that number the republican soldiers who perished in the western departments, in the havoc made on the banks of the Rhine and the Danube, in the *hundred and eleven* battles fought in Italy, which, if we may believe General Berthier, only cost the republic *the loss of a*

*few brave men*; and lastly we must remember, that the Swifs did not submit to the yoke without a manly struggle. The destruction during these three last campaigns must have amounted, at the least, to half the number of the four preceding, and I think we shall take an impartial medium, if we say that the war has hitherto cost France about a million and a half of soldiers \*.

I know not whether her governors will accuse this dreadful estimate of exaggeration, and I admit that they have enabled themselves to deny it, by carefully destroying every paper that might have served as a voucher. Of this we may judge by the speech in which the Deputy Thouret reproached the war-offices “ with not having provided *any statement or any document*, that might show in what corps any individual citizen had been incorporated.” This was, indeed, the most certain mean of burying in eternal oblivion the only data that might have revealed, at a future day, the losses France has sustained.

Should any one here accuse me of injustice, he must be ignorant of the ravages committed by the epidemic diseases of the military hospitals, which carried off not only the sick and the convalescents, but most of the experienced physicians and surgeons; whence a new cause of mortality arose: for as there was no longer a regular supply of pupils, owing to the desertion and annihilation of the ancient schools of

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\* No doubt there were many foreigners in this number; but many more Frenchmen have fallen in the armies of the coalesced powers, than of foreigners under the banners of the republic.

physic and surgery \*, the vacancies were filled by ex-monks and barbers, who, under the name of *officers of health*, *destroy more of the species than war and famine*. This, at least, has been declared by the Deputy Vitet : and his colleague Baraillon, who being himself a physician, deserves some credence, has certified, that “ in many of the military hospitals, *these shameless ignoramuses have ordered corrosive sublimate and arsenic for emetics*. Do not imagine,” he adds, “ that it is the sword of the enemy that has cut off the greater part of our brave defenders ; no, ’tis *sickness* ; and I should alarm and frighten you if I related their effects.”

---

\* The decree of the 15th September 1793 suppressed all the schools, colleges, and faculties of physic ; and although, after the fall of Robespierre, their re-establishment was speedily ordered, yet the same neglect attended this order that frustrated all those relative to the public education, the execution of which was prevented by the poverty of the finances. The *Moniteur* of 24th April 1798 contains an official report on the *evil effects of the present state* of this branch of public instruction, of which the following is an affecting extract : “ Those who devote themselves to the healing art are not obliged to give proofs of having studied in any science whatever ; they undergo no examination, and practise every branch of medicine they choose, without competition of candidates, without examination, without diploma, and without being authorized by law. No wonder then our villages and country places are ravaged by empirics of every kind. Yet these men, whom humanity would proscribe, still find protectors and defenders. *Anarchy* in medicine is their element ; the *assassinations* they daily commit intimidate them not ; they seem allied with our most cruel enemies to *extirpate the citizens of the republic*.”

At the commencement of the year 1798, Baraillon pointed out one of the principal causes of this *anarchy* ; it is as follows : “ The officers of health attached to the civil hospitals have not received any part of their salaries, during ten or eleven months. Hence some have been reduced to sell their most necessary effects to avoid starving, while others have been obliged wholly to abandon their profession. How is it possible the sick should receive proper relief, when those who should relieve their sufferings are left destitute of the means of subsistence ?”

This last observation alluded to a circumstance singularly fatal to the republican armies ; the immense number of youths, or rather of children, whose martial zeal engaged them to enter the army before they were of an age to support the fatigues of a campaign. Of these, the number that have fallen must be very considerable, since General Jourdan, when proposing his new plan of a military conscription for raising a million of soldiers, was forced to admit that the complaints of Baraillon were too well founded, and became a *powerful motive* to receive into the army only those *whose growth was completed, and who have acquired their full strength.*

Combining the effects of all these extraordinary causes of mortality, I have estimated the total loss of the troops of France both by land and sea at one million five hundred thousand.

It is infinitely more difficult to calculate the number of lives which the revolution has destroyed in the interior of the country, and yet I am much afraid we shall fall short of the truth in appreciating them at only a million. I do not here allude to the number of valuable lives cut off by the permanent or ambulatory guillotines. How numerous soever these quotidian executions may have been, the impression they made arose from women being frequently among the victims, from their funereal catalogues being daily published, and from these containing the names of the most distinguished persons in France ; as for instance, Madame Elizabeth and M. de Malesherbes. But I allude to the peasantry who burned the country-houses in 1789, and who were hunted down and

killed by hundreds. I allude to the æra of the fatal lanterns, and the desert to which the four departments beyond the Loire are reduced. I allude to the innumerable insurrections that have successively broken out in the provinces, and which were all extinguished in blood. I speak of all that which has been shed at Paris in the different *reactions* (or convulsions), the *drownings* of Nantes, and the *case-shot executions* of the South, and among others, the successive and repeated massacres at Avignon, Lyons, Orange, Arles, Toulon, and Marseilles. I allude to the exterminations that have successively destroyed the Constitutionalists, the Federalists, the Robespierrians, and even the Thermidorians. I allude to the priests who have been butchered, transported, or thrown into dungeons, and that immense crowd of Frenchmen imprisoned under the title of *suspected persons*, who came to an untimely end by sickness, by misery, by famine, and by grief and anguish of mind, in the houses of confinement in which they were heaped together. To this dreadful catalogue we must add the emigrations of nobles, of the easy classes of commoners, and of the *thirty thousand plebeian cultivators*, who in 1793 fled from Alsace to *escape being put to death*. It is well known these never obtained permission to return to their homes, although, previous to the 18th Fructidor, the Council of Five Hundred solemnly declared, that they were *fugitives* and not *emigrants*\*.

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\* See the Moniteur of 4th September 1797, containing a report, in which Rabaut reminded his colleagues that Bentabolé, St. Just, Lebas, and Toussedoire themselves acknowledged, that among *these thirty thousand fugitives, scarcely ten counter-revolutionists could be found*.

But this is not all : for the reign of the Moderatists, which preceded that of the Fructidorians, gave birth to what is called the *reaction royale* (or convulsion of the royalists), because principally directed against the Jacobins and those who had become proprietors of church-lands. Those who escaped wrote to the Councils, that *the royal reactionaries committed crimes of which the histories of the most barbarous nations afford no example*. If we may believe Gay-Vernon, these crimes cost the lives of *twenty-three thousand republicans assassinated on the banks of the Rhone in the fine countries of the South*. Santhonax, who pretends to have made a more exact estimate, increases the number to *twenty-five thousand*; and Lecointre, President of the Council of Five Hundred, has lately declared that he could, *with a dreadful catalogue in his hand, prove that above thirty thousand murders were committed in that reaction*. There is every reason to believe that this catalogue is very much exaggerated; but the 18th Fructidor has only ended in producing a contrary *reaction*, and placing the poniards of the assassins in the hands of the party that complained of *assassination*. The reports also of Rabaut, and all those who travel over those fine countries, agree that they are most visibly depopulating.

I shall elsewhere perhaps speak of the ravages of what is now called the *plomb destructeur*, or leaden executioner of the military commissions, because they form no object amid the great massacres we have just been contemplating. If we take a survey of all these funereal catalogues, it is evident we can only form very vague conjectures on the number of men

they have carried off. But I do not imagine I exceed the truth in estimating them at a million.

It would however be a great error to consider their numerical amount as a complete abstract of all their losses. Those have yet to learn the first principles of political arithmetic, who imagine it is in the field of battle and in the hospitals that an account can be taken of the lives a revolution or a war has cost. Much less important is it to inscribe that awful register with the number of men who are killed, than with that of the children it has prevented, and will still prevent, from coming into the world. This is the deepest wound the population of France has received. Of this however it should appear her present leaders have not even the slightest presentiment.

To be able to prove its depth, we must not forget, that hitherto, in all modern wars, the men who devoted themselves to a military life were generally drawn from the idlest vagabonds, and most dissipated classes of society; already so much reduced, that celibacy was in some measure imposed on them by their poverty. But the warlike population which the French have, during seven years, sacrificed in the field of battle, was drawn indifferently from every class, without paying any particular regard to that of men in easy circumstances, who had the greatest disposition towards matrimony, and the most abundant means of supporting the expenses, and attending to the education of a numerous family. The requisitions have blindly and forcibly dragged to the armies this invaluable class of citizens, who have perished there by thousands, and generally as privates

in the ranks. Though it was chiefly this class that repaired the breaches made by war in the population of the country, yet were they swept off in the flower of their lives, at the age of their force and vigour (between eighteen and thirty-five years), and at the period most favourable to propagation. We ought also to include in this calculation a proportionable number of women condemned either to sterility, or that licentiousness whose effects are nearly the same with regard to reproduction. Supposing that, of the whole number of men destroyed, only two millions had been united to as many females; according to the calculation of Buffon, these two millions of couples ought to bring into the world twelve millions of children, in order to supply, at the age of thirty-nine, a number equal to that of their parents. This is a point of view in which the consequence of such a destruction of men becomes almost incalculable, because they have much more effect with regard to the twelve millions of children they prevent from coming into existence, than the two millions and a half of men for whom France now mourns.— Thus it is not till a future period that she will be able to estimate this dreadful breach.

In computing only at a seventh the reduction in the births since the war, and as their average number was near a million annually, we shall find they must have diminished by that number; and as more than half these new-born children would be alive at this day, this makes at least 500,000 individuals to be added to the diminution of the living, without taking into the account that their parents would have still



continued for a long time to add to their number of children.

This only relates to the births that have not taken place. As to those which have followed their natural course during this interval, it is a well-known fact, that nothing influences the mortality of children in a higher degree than the misery of their parents; and this must indeed have been very great in France, since Buffon informs us, " that above a quarter of the new-born children die within the first eleven months of their life, near a third under three years of age, and one half under that of eight years and one month\*."

Buffon however appears to have committed an error in considering this calculation as general. He applies indiscriminately to the whole human race a result drawn from the register of France, as if the mortality of children did not vary in proportion to the ease of their parents' circumstances, and to the liberty of nations, or the enlightened justice of their governors. It was, in fact, owing to the extreme paternal care of the Helvetic governments, and the general well-being of the governed, that the Swiss peasantry brought up to the age of puberty precisely one third more children in proportion to the number of births than the peasantry of France, and that one half of the children born arrived at the age of forty-one years†.

\*. See Buffon's work on the Chances of Life (*Des Probabilités de la Vie*).

† Though the cultivators of the Pays de Vaud were not so easy in their circumstances as those of the German part of Switzerland, yet the tables drawn up in forty-one parishes of that district, state that of 1000 children 667 lived to the age of eight years, and 500

I leave to others to calculate how much the mortality of children born in the midst of famine, of requisitions, and of scourges of every kind, which have successively oppressed their wretched parents, must have increased in France within these seven years, particularly in the towns. No doubt we ought not to judge of this strictly by the increasing number of children exposed, or according to their equally increasing mortality, of which I spoke in my last work; but what a dreadful idea must we not form, if the official registers of the hospitals of Paris may be taken as a proof! These documents state, that of 3122 orphans of the revolution brought to the foundling hospital in the year iv. no more than 215 were alive at the end of that year: so that not one in fourteen escaped death. If since that period neither the publication of these registers, nor of the proceedings of the hospitals at Metz has been hazarded, this must arise from the mortality which has probably made new ravages in those institutions. At least I draw that inference from the language of the *bureau central*, when they denounce their retarded discovery as a *real assassination*. And what can be more deserv-

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to that of forty-one. See the table in the *Memoirs of the Société économique* of Berne for the year 1766. It is also found in the works of Doctor Price.

If the various states of Europe kept and published annually an exact account of their population, noting carefully in a second column the exact age at which the children die, this second column would show the relative merit of the governments, and the comparative happiness of their subjects. A simple arithmetical statement would then perhaps be more conclusive than all the arguments that could be adduced.

ing of that name than the facts which Duffieux then exposed?—"Learn," said he to his colleagues, "that here at Paris, and particularly within the last two months, an epidemical disorder devastates the foundling hospital; *epidemical* did I say? 'tis a scourge more horrid still—'tis a terrific famine, that daily consumes and devours one half of the innocent victims there deposited by audacious vice, or unfortunate virtue\*."

By comparing all these melancholy facts, I infer that the population of France has already diminished about one eighth, and that this diminution will still be more or less progressive till the numerical balance between the sexes shall be in some measure restored. In 1797 an English traveller published in London a comparative view of the population of the sixteen principal towns of France, from which it appears, that on the 1st of January 1789 it amounted to 1,951,000, and that on the 1st of July 1796 it was reduced to 1,397,000. This reduction proves at once the void produced by deaths and the deficiency of births, and

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\* "We cannot, without *deploring the depravation of morals*, observe the number of exposed children increasing to 7000 in the department of the Seine, and to more than 44,000 in the rest of France."—Thus did Daubermesnil express himself on the 24th September 1798, when he declared to the Council that the sum of 3,000,000 granted in the preceding year was insufficient for the demands of the year VII. It is to be lamented, that while the reporter was thus *deploring* the increase of this branch of expenditure, and of the number of children thrown upon the nation, he was silent on the two points most essential to be known, viz. the interval during which these children were brought to the hospitals, and the proportion of those who live to those who die. The committee of the Constituent Assembly had calculated that formerly about one in seven survived. If, since the revolution, thirteen out of fourteen have died, or even nine out of ten, the 51,000 exposed children now alive would be the remains of above half a million of births.

if it is deduced from authentic documents, the population of the great towns is diminished by nearly one third: a diminution which, however, must be partly attributed to the immense reduction in the number of hired servants. Probably the small towns have not suffered in the same proportion; and as the population of the country has suffered still less, I am not far from believing that of the towns, which amounted to nearly 8,000,000, to have been diminished by nearly one fourth, while that of the country may have lost only a sixteenth, or one million.

Although no Frenchman has yet had the courage to enter upon so melancholy a research, yet one individual of that nation has declared, that, notwithstanding the accession of territory, a deficit must be expected in the population. "*It has incontestably diminished,*" said Barbé Marbois, on the 18th March 1797, "and the internal consumption will be proportionably reduced. We must therefore preserve the market of the colonies; otherwise what could not be consumed would cease to be produced."

Such however was not the language of his colleagues after his transportation, or whenever the subject of discussion has been the prolongation of the war, or the extorting new subsidies from the people. The address of Bonaparte to his soldiers, on the 14th July 1797, when he declared, "that they owed their services to *thirty* millions of Frenchmen," is not yet forgotten. The minister of finances adopted a calculation somewhat more modest in the memorial he presented eighteen days after, in which he proposed new taxes. He there complained that the produce

of the post-office had *diminished*, although the population had INCREASED ONE EIGHTH. This was estimating it at about twenty-eight millions.

Here I expected that the exaggeration of the French would have stopped, when, to my great astonishment, M. de Calonne took up the pen in London solely to represent his countrymen as a nation *both agricultural and warlike, now consisting of THIRTY-THREE millions of inhabitants*. As he published this last statistical work in the month of May 1798, and subsequent to the cession of the left bank of the Rhine, he evidently considers it as an established fact, that not only the ancient population of France has not been diminished, but that the additional departments have increased it by above eight millions of inhabitants, that is, one third more than the Councils of Paris\* pretend, and almost double of what the

\* "Conquests and treaties," said Echauffériaux on the 12th of April 1798, "have contributed to increase the population by more than 6,000,000 of inhabitants."—It is observable, that while speaking of this increase of the new, Echauffériaux prudently passed by the diminution of the old population, and that he was careful not to specify the sum total.

It is true, that what Echauffériaux did not dare to hazard, the Directory have attempted, by means of the *Rédacteur*, well known to be their official paper. This journal has amplified Echauffériaux's enumeration, though without going so far as M. de Calonne. The following is an extract from an apostrophe in this directorial journal, addressed to the kings of Europe:—"What can you avail against a republic of thirty-two millions of men? History does not record that such a Colossus ever yet existed. Make haste then to retire from its strides; otherwise your thrones will be broken to pieces like crumbling clay beneath its gigantic steps."

But it appears this new title of *Colossus* was not so much adapted to make the kings retire from its strides as to lead the people-king into Egypt. For precisely at that time the expedition of the Nile was ready to fail, and the orators of both parties considering Bonaparte's fleet as invincible, no longer made a mystery of its being destined for—"the grand enterprise of regenerating a country which

best geographers, as, for instance, Randel and Busching, assign to the incorporated provinces, including Geneva, Mulhausen, and all the new departments of Corcyra, Ithaca, and the Ægean sea.

Had the French confined themselves to asserting, that the deficit of their population is at least compensated by that of the conquered or incorporated countries, as I believe to be arithmetically true, I should have confined myself to reminding them, that these conquests, even supposing them to be retained, will not restore to ancient France the men she has sacrificed to her aggrandizement, that the military requisitions have pressed with at least an equal weight on the new territories, and that, having suffered a destruction of their males proportionate to that in France\*, they are condemned to all the causes of future depopulation we have just been enumerating.

It is not enough to have pointed out these causes. An impartial mind ought to explore every contrary

was the first seat of civilization, to restore to their ancient birth-place the sciences, the arts, and the industry of man; and to lay a *foundation* for a new Thebes or a new Memphis, for future ages to complete."—Thus did Echassériaux express himself while preaching this crusade in Egypt, and vaunting the *exuberance* of the *resources* possessed by the republic with which to fly to that conquest. But it must be observed that the same orator, who now talks but of conquest, and the *superabundant* population of France, said two years ago—"All great empires are ultimately destroyed, or end in destroying themselves. Lewis XIV. at length subdued and forced to abandon his projects, wept over his triumphs. *Great conquests are followed by great reverses.*"

\* As they have already been mentioned in the statement given above, it would be superfluous to repeat them here; but we must add the present and future deficiency of births.

tendency which may more or less counterbalance their effects ; and examine whether the revolution does not, of itself produce some means of reparation.

In this view I consider the increase of salaries, if we may suppose, that is likely to continue as long as the scarcity of hands. The condition of journeymen being thereby considerably meliorated, should that class of men adopt habits of economy, it may be expected marriages will become more numerous among them, and children be better fed and taken care of.

Some hopes seem also to be founded on the liberty to marry granted to catholic priests. Even had they not been massacred and transported, it is doubtful whether the inhabitants of the country, still attached to the religion of their ancestors, will elect and pay salaries to pastors, who, by marrying, set an example of its violation in their own conduct. As to the abolition of monasteries, the number of individuals who for the last twenty years have devoted themselves to a monastic life, is so small as scarcely to deserve a moment's consideration in regard to the reproduction of the species.

The great reduction in the number of domestics in the towns of France will be more favourable to population ; this class consisted chiefly of single persons, who in future will continue in the country, and embrace a married life.

But a cause very different in its nature may in some measure accelerate the repeopling of France—I mean its present depopulation. Nor let this be considered as a paradox ; for it is a certain fact, that every great and sudden destruction of the human race, operates,

in some measure, as a bounty for reproduction on the individuals who survive. There being then a greater facility of subsistence, many persons marry who would not otherwise, and therefore a greater number of children are born to fill up the void. Thus, in like circumstances, a population of twenty-two millions, placed on an extent of country which had a little while before supported twenty-five, will much sooner add one eighth to its number than could have taken place without that previous reduction. It is thus alone, we can account for the reparation within two or three generations, of extraordinary mortalities produced in civilized countries by the plague and other causes. How is it possible to explain the rapid population of North America, unless by the great demand for men; the vast number of new settlements that solicit the choice of those who arrive at the age of virility; and, above all, a constitution which gives room for the developement of their faculties, and secures an undisturbed enjoyment of the fruits of their labours? These three causes have always more or less prevailed in every country where returning order and peace have succeeded some great national calamity; as, for instance, in France, after the destructive reign of Lewis XIV.; and in Prussia, after the seven years war. If, when the population is once diminished, the causes here enumerated did not operate to restore it, it would still have continued to decline in the same manner as in countries exhausted by despotism; as in Spain, Greece, Sicily, Asia Minor, &c.

But let us not deceive ourselves. This cause of repopulation thus associated with depopulation itself,



necessarily presupposes a state of profound peace, and the existence of social order sufficient to protect and encourage this increase of industry and reproduction in a people who have lately emerged from a long succession of misery. Were we to listen to some Frenchmen, particularly those who assert that the great blank in their population will be speedily and infallibly filled up, we should believe that history has never presented the phenomenon of an enlightened nation returning to barbarism, of rich countries sinking into the lowest state of poverty, or of fertile territories reduced to sterility. If the once luxuriant coasts of Africa now exhibit but a barren desert; if a few scattered huts occupy the spot once covered by the proud and populous city of Carthage; if the stock of the human race has there almost entirely withered away; is it not because it has ceased to be sustained and nourished by an enlightened and protecting government? Is it not because an ignorant and vexatious despotism has gradually destroyed all the germs of revivification? Now as popular despotism is far more destructive than that of an individual, it is necessary France should chain up the monster, and attain, under whatsoever form, a temperate government, before the reproduction of the species can proceed with the increased energy here spoken of. It will also be considerably delayed by one circumstance peculiar to the ravages of the revolution, viz. that these have not, like the plague, fallen indiscriminately on all ages, and on both sexes. On the contrary, they have destroyed the proportions established by Nature, by carrying off only men who had arrived at the age of virility; so

that it is highly probable there are now among the single, three marriageable women to one male adult. Possibly, like the legislators of Athens, those of France propose to remedy this temporary disorder by polygamy; and it is perhaps to prepare the minds of men for such a change, that they have caused this idea to be thrown out in the senate of the Cisalpine republic\*.

Whatever measures they pursue, I will venture to predict that the population of France can only be restored to its ancient level under the protection of a legitimate government, at once resolved to respect property, and capable of defending it; and who are interested in maintaining tranquillity within and peace without. What if the sword of the revolution should still be wielded through many succeeding years? At a period when no conjecture can be formed of the time when the French will restore it to the scabbard, may we not exclaim with the poet of the civil wars of Rome—

Hæ facient dextræ, quidquid non expleat ætas  
Ulla, nec humanum reparaet genus omnibus annis,

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\* See the article *Milan* in the *Moniteur* of the 16th April 1798, No. 207, where the following motion is said to have been made by Campagnoni—"The institution of polygamy owes not its birth to the country we inhabit; but it may become, if not generally, at least *individually* necessary. A law that should proscribe it would be a *sophism*. Marriage is holy, not on account of any symbolical sense ascribed to it by theologians, but because its true object is to perpetuate the finest work of creative power, and render the human race immortal."

Such are the advances in legislation already made by those *political families whose birth is one of the most astonishing phenomena of our age*. Thus did the President of the French Directory express himself with regard to them a few days after this motion.

Ut vacet à ferro : gentes Mars iste futuras  
 Obruet, et populos ævi venientis in orbem  
 Erepto natale feret. Tunc omne latinum  
 Fabula nomen erit.

LUCAN.

Will it be believed that several French republicans discover sure means of repopulation in the agrarian law, which has parcelled out the great landed estates ? They pretend that farmers, becoming henceforward proprietors, and therefore being now in easy circumstances, will have a greater number of children, and more abundant means of nurturing them with care. I might contest the premises, were it not sufficient to observe, that the influence drawn from it depends entirely on the security with which these pretended proprietors can reap the produce of their usurped possessions, which presupposes that this grand usurpation may be established and perpetuated without a continual state of civil war ; a supposition, in my opinion, wholly inadmissible. So early as 1797, a considerable number of these pretended proprietors began to be in want, and expressed a wish to restore their share of the national plunder. If any there are who still flatter themselves peacefully to enjoy it, let them take a view of Ireland, and trace to their source the troubles that have for ages distracted that country. Let them peruse the history of the confiscations that have there taken place, or rather let them behold their destructive effects in the penal code with which it became necessary to entrench them. In vain, under the present king, have these laws, which served as their defence, been successively repealed. In vain has a just and a firm government endeavoured to meliorate

the condition of the Catholics, and regain their alienated affections. In vain has it attempted gradually to prepare them for that political liberty of which it was once necessary to deprive them. Nothing would satisfy them; and many ages of possession have neither raised the value of land in that country to its natural level\*, given full security to the descendants of those who first acquired them, nor robbed the representatives of the ejected families of their hopes of recovering, sword in hand, the possession of the estates which they have been told once belonged to their ancestors. The late atrocious insurrection, being unaccompanied by any manifesto whatever, is a proof they have no real grievances to urge against the present government; and yet they have endeavoured to overturn it by committing innumerable crimes, and have sacrificed more than 30,000 men. What an instructive lesson for the people of France! What a prospect presents itself to them, should they not restore the confiscated lands before long possession shall have rendered the remedy worse than the disease!

But while we place in the opposite scale this cause of political distraction, we must also add certain moral causes, which will inevitably more or less prevent marriages. I allude, among others, to the institution of *divorces*, on account of the *incompatibility of tempers*; an institution which, if we may believe Delle-ville, has introduced into France a *traffic in human flesh*. On the 10th January 1797, the committee

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\* The value of land in Ireland, even of that which has never been confiscated, has almost always been one third less in proportion to its rent than in Scotland or England.

appointed to make a report on this subject, thus expressed themselves by their chairman, Favart :—" You would shudder were I to present a faithful picture of the victims that libertinism and cupidity have sacrificed in the name of a law, whose sole object was to render marriages more happy and respectable, by giving more liberty to the married."—The same reporter added, that *more than twenty thousand marriages owed their dissolution to this law.*

But its effects, perhaps, on population, ought rather to be appreciated by the number of marriages it has prevented, than by those it has dissolved. I appeal to what the Deputy Bonnières says of parents who refuse to give their daughters to young men, though deeply enamoured of them : " They dread speedily to see their child deserted and returning to her paternal roof, stripped of her innocence, robbed of her charms, a wife without a husband, may I not almost say without honour ? No, certainly ; for she has suffered no stain. Yet who can compare her condition with that of her who has not yet quitted the paternal mansion ?"

Some member attempted to defend this institution by saying, " Do you forget that the law which is this day attacked, was prepared *in the wise and enlightened discussions of the Constituent Assembly*, where the necessity of divorces in a free state was acknowledged ?"—Happily, one of the original supporters of the law having candidly confessed that it was not adapted to the French nation, and that it had *poisoned their morals, and introduced anarchy into marriages*, it was resolved to modify it by decreeing, that the

public officers should not pronounce a divorce for incompatibility of temper, till six months after the last of the three acts of *non-conciliation*.

This barrier will, however, evidently be insufficient while other laws are suffered to remain, whose sole object seems to be the multiplication of divorces, or at least of those connexions which must almost inevitably produce them. Such, for instance, is the law which permits orphans to marry during their minority without consent of their guardians. Not but that they are obliged to consult a kind of *family tribunal*; the latter, however, would in vain refuse their consent; for if the minor has complied with the required form, the marriage is valid. Hence it is easy to conceive that innumerable disgraceful or ill-affected unions have taken place, which bear a much nearer resemblance to concubinage than to marriage.

We must appeal to travellers who have resided in the great towns of France, if we would learn to what a degree the facility of this kind of union, and of divorces, has destroyed the ideas of modesty in women, relaxed the bonds of marriage, and thrown into confusion all civil, moral, and religious opinions, with which that institution was formerly interwoven. Of this we may however form some idea by what passed in the debates of the Council of Five Hundred.

“ *A member.* A citizen married the sister of his former wife. He is now a widower, and as he cannot bear to separate himself from the family, he *petitions for leave to marry his mother-in-law.*”

The *Moniteur* of the 27th December 1796, from which I have extracted this motion, only adds, that

*the Council passed to the order of the day ; and the editors have had the delicacy not to mention the name of the member who presented this incestuous petition\* . Can it be believed that in the Moniteur of the 27th of January 1797, a still more disgusting incident*

\* Neither this member nor the petitioner however incurred any risk, since the republican code does not rank *incest* among crimes. The last journals inform us that the Tribunal of Appeal (or *cassation*) has annulled a sentence pronounced against one M<sup>er</sup>ignon a publican, and his daughter, for *incestuous commerce*, alleging, that *the legislature has not provided against the crime of INCEST*, and that it is not classed in the penal code.

That of *rapes* has been provided against and classed : but the Moniteur of 9th July 1798, affords an example of the punishment by which it is repressed : " The council of war of the 17th military division has condemned to two years close imprisonment one Petrinot, a veteran invalid, aged sixty-three years, for having kidnapped and *violated* a little girl aged *three years and a half*."

It is worthy of observation, that the same penal code in which *incest* is not classed, and where the kidnapping and *violating* an infant are only punished with *two years* imprisonment, condemns to *four years* imprisonment every one who shall *pull down or MUTILATE, or ATTEMPT to pull down or MUTILATE, any tree of liberty!*—Under the auspices of such a legislation we ought not to wonder at the dreadful progress of depravity : and yet the last Paris papers give a new instance, still more disgusting, on account of the effrontery of the legislators than of the immodesty of the women denounced. On the day previous to the hearing of a cause, of which the subject was obscene, the tribunal of the Seine thought it their duty, *through respect to the public morals*, to apply to the legislative body for authority to try these causes privately, and complained a second time that women came in crowds to hear them.

But what was the answer of the legislators? *The order of the day ; " because the granting such an authority would be contrary to the constitution."* Such is the mode in which they affect religiously to respect the forms instituted for the protection of criminal justice, while these very men had, a month before, authorized the Directory to destroy the pannels of juries, to displace half the judges, and to substitute military commissions !

In England, although all trials are published, no judge hesitates to order women to withdraw when such causes come on. Yet I never heard that the English, who are justly represented as very jealous of their liberty, ever imagined it could be infringed by an attention to public decorum. But woe to the judge who should there dismiss a jury, and tell them that he can try a cause as well without their assistance !

appeared? Lecointre asserted, that "among the petitioners against divorces, were several unfortunate women, from whom revolutionists had, by means of terror, extorted their consent. Of the latter he instanced one, who having *signed* the condemnation of a citizen, made proposals to his daughter, and forced her to marry him by promising to save the life of her father. This miserable female accepted his offer, and took to her bed the executioner of her father. Will you decree," said Lecointre, "that such bonds shall be indissoluble?"

The French revolution has thrown into confusion the laws regarding individual families, no less than that of the great family of the state. Nor is this all. To complete their work, they have, as much as in them lay, sapped paternal authority, by retrenching four years from the minority of children during the life of parents; by depriving the latter of the double power of rewarding in their wills the filial care and affection of their children, or punishing a bad son with disinherittance\*; by permitting illegitimate chil-

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\* The decree of the 7th March 1793 abolished the power of parents to distribute their property to their heirs in a direct line, and gave to all the children an equal right of inheritance in their effects. A subsequent decree gave parents a power to dispose of *one tenth* of their fortune. But another gave illegitimate children a right, in certain cases, to claim a third part of the inheritance. Such is the new system of jurisprudence, by the aid of which the present legislators boast of having *restored Nature to her first rights, and destroyed the terrific Colossus of Fortune*. Time will show whether they have destroyed the truly terrific Colossus of Immorality, and whether the number of legitimate children will not diminish in proportion as matrimony and parents are robbed of their *just rights*.

With the French it is never long before the revelations of experience unfold themselves. On the 3th July 1798, Le Noir la Roche proposed to *hasten the modification* of the laws, under which *bastards*,



dren to share the inheritance with the legitimate, and by continually repeating that even the latter *do not belong to their parents* \*.

now called *children born out of marriage*, have become copartners in inheritances. He acknowledged these laws were *defective*; and some days after Girod declared, without disguise, that they prevent a great number of marriages, and occasion many divorces: "When a father," said he, "marries his daughter, he gives her to a man whose subsistence appears secure, and who promises such to his wife and children; but disorder and misery are now suddenly introduced into this hitherto happy family. Strange children claim a place in the paternal mansion, and the offspring of obscure intrigues dispute their share with the legitimate issue of connubial love. No mother, no wife, can endure such a mixture; she will immediately load with reproaches the man who has thus deceived her, who, when he solicited her hand, had promised to be a father to none but the children he should have by her. No woman will now leave in her husband's family that property which may perhaps be destined to swell the portions of the children of another. Hence the nuptial bed is deserted, divorce comes in, and the afflicted husband can only accuse the law of that which destroys the happiness both of himself and of his family. But this is not all. If well-affected marriages are to be dissolved after consanguination, those which would otherwise have taken place will be *suspended*. Every father will shudder at the prospect of the evils here enumerated. He will shrink from consigning his daughter and his grandchildren to the dangers of such heart-rending *discoveries*. Since the law of the 12th Brumaire, he will say, strange children are introduced into families who had no suspicion of their existence. What security have I that my daughter and her children will not become the victims of this law?"—Girod concluded by a motion, that children born out of marriage should take a part, *but not an equal share*, with the legitimate offspring.

Another member seconded the motion—because "the interests of morality require that particular favours and *privileges* should be annexed to the marriage state." And although they dared not re-establish these *privileges*; yet the two speeches here quoted prove, that in the Councils themselves those very republican *laws* are openly *accused* as the causes of domestic *misery*, which other orators have vaunted as bequeathing to France *the most sublime of political constitutions*.

\* More than a year ago the Deputy Béranger complained of a *prejudice generally adopted throughout France*, namely, that *children belong to their parents*. Such was the error which to him appeared *very fatal in political economy*, and against which he declaimed with so much eloquence, that he was immediately added to the committee of public instruction; a committee which has been long deliberating on

Let it not be imagined that these are empty declamations, lost and forgotten within the walls of the Councils, who hear them with applause. One of the last papers from Paris informs us of their alarming effects. "Parricide among the ancients was so odious, and so rare, that on that crime their penal code was silent. Even in our own times it has been deliberated in the Constituent Assembly, whether any punishment should be annexed to it. *And within four months no less than SIX PARRICIDES have re-echoed through the tribunal of appeal\*!*"

This picture of the alteration in domestic morals is the more properly introduced here, as it proves that while the pretended Solons of France have been draining the channels of political riches, they have, as it were, studied to corrupt the principal sources of morality and individual happiness; that they have brought into action all the various causes of depopu-

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the means of tearing children from their parents. If they have not hitherto been able to determine their plan, it is owing to the impoverished state of the finances, which does not admit of organizing *Schools of Mars*.

\* This fact is extracted from the *Ami des Loix* of the 20th August 1798; and the *Moniteur* of the 5th October following states another no less horrid. It is contained in a letter from the administration of the department of the Var, who write to the minister of justice, "That one Hugues, a man of property and affluence, has cut the throats of his three children; and that the justice of peace having found the monster sitting at his ease under a fig-tree, and asking him who killed them, he answered, 'I did.'—'And why did you commit that act?'—'Through no motive of interest. I have property enough: but since my children cannot obtain salvation because there are no priests, I have killed them, that they might go to heaven'."—Thus, while sons, rendered unnatural and cruel by the revolution, murder their fathers to get possession of their property, fathers, alienated by misfortune, and become fanatics through religious persecutions, kill their offspring with their own hands, to save them from the career of calamities and crimes that lies before them!

lation; that they have neglected no means in their power that could accelerate it; and that it *should seem*, as Portalis observed, *that, to form the citizen, it is requisite to destroy the man; or that, to establish the republic, the voice of nature must be extinguished.*

They will answer, perhaps, that we must not judge of the institution of divorce by its immediate effects. Doubtless, they will add, that if it has dissolved a great number of marriages, and if the war has prevented so many from taking place, it has given birth to a vast number, formed in order to avoid the levies, from which the legislature has had the wisdom to exempt married men.\*. But without observing that this exemption is now repealed, or that these marriages would probably have taken place, even had they neither been hastened nor forced, will they restore to life the two millions and a half who have fallen by a premature death, and who, having at-

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\* They might with equal justice urge the institution of a new species of *republican marriages*, which are very numerous, if we may credit the account of one who declares he was an eye-witness of them at Nanci and at Metz. Whenever the army retired to winter-quarters, many of the soldiers contracted marriages under a previous agreement to be divorced when they left their cantonments. To learn the effects of this legal prostitution, with relation to the multiplication of the species, consult the accounts of the foundling hospital at Metz in my last work, p. 176.

Nearly the same circumstance attended the marriages contracted to avoid the military levies; for in the sitting of the 16th August, when every citizen not married previous to the 12th January 1798, was subjected to the new conscription, the reporter, Delbret, observed, "That if the *privilege* enjoyed by married men were continued, *young men would marry their maid-servants, and then avail themselves of the law of divorce*; that the number of marriages of this kind *was singularly increased*, and that such a *violation of morality* ought not to be favoured and encouraged." This was thought a sufficient pretext for *violating* the promise made to the young people already married, and to put a stop to this *privilege* in future.

tained the age of reproduction, were themselves the remains of almost three times their number of births? Two millions and a half of individuals, with all their posterity, lost for ever! My hand trembles while it records the facts from which a calculation so shocking to humanity is deduced.

We have hitherto considered this loss as it relates to the interests of humanity; let us now view its effects on the *resources* of industry and finance, the investigation of which is the principal object of this essay.

A numerous population is, no doubt, a great means of strength, and even a sign of financial resources, since these originally depend on reproduction, and that on the number of hands employed. But when we consider it in this latter point of view, before we take an account of the number of individuals, we ought first to inquire, whether they are happy, enlightened, industrious, and economical; and secondly we ought, above all things, to examine whether they enjoy that easy subsistence so requisite to increasing, from year to year, the mass of produce of every kind, of which the comparative economy and accumulation determine the relative prosperity and opulence of nations, and the resources of their governments. It is only by this investigation that a reason can be assigned, why the little nation who inhabits the marshes of Holland has long paid the government of the Seven United Provinces a larger tribute than is collected by the Emperor of Russia from all his subjects, though seven or eight times as numerous.

Though the French were far inferior in industry to the Dutch, yet they were one of the most laborious nations of Europe. But their activity was fettered, in the country, by the poverty of the farmers, and in the towns by the prejudices which discouraged trade, and the want of capital so necessary to give free scope to industry by the division of labour. At the beginning of the present century M. Mélon, who had reflected much on the immense advantages to be derived from the mechanical powers, by adapting them to manufactures, recommended to his countrymen to employ the large and expensive machines then coming into use in England, observing, that *to perform with one man's labour what had before required that of two, was in fact to double the number of citizens.*

The example of Great Britain has so fully justified this assertion, that in some of her manufactures, even by the confession of her rivals, as much is done by sixty-eight hands as in theirs requires 392 \*. It is

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\* See a work by Citizen Arnould, entitled, *Système Maritime et Politique des Européens pendant le 18 Siècle*; wherein the author confesses, that "England has carried to the utmost perfection both the theory and practice of the mode of employing productive industry." See also the Memoir of a Batavian Adjutant-general, Quatremere Dijonval, who asserts the above fact; and offers to point out to the French republic the steps by which the manufacturers of England have arrived at this wonderful economy of labour. I much suspect that this secret consists in the largeness of their capitals; and I am much deceived, if this progressive accumulation does not arise from the secure and undisturbed enjoyment of their property. The instance cited by the Batavian adjutant is, however, far from being the most striking he might have chosen. But it is sufficient to prove, that too much importance is attached to the comparative numerical population; and that twelve millions of men, who are happy, easy, and abundantly fed, are capable of more productive labour than twice that number of a degenerate, poor, weak, and miserable race, destitute of emulation, or of motives to exertion. Let Ireland be

easy to perceive, that the vast manufactories in which the processes of art are so wonderfully abridged, require immense capitals; and it is well known, that, even before the revolution, the French adventurers had not funds sufficiently ample for similar undertakings. The rich manufactories of Lyons formed almost the only exception; but these have been reduced to ashes by Dubois Crancé, and the workmen massacred by his successor. Now if, as every one agrees, the double scourge of the revolution and the war has principally fallen on the inhabitants of the towns, and on the classes of men most employed in the useful arts and manufactures, it must have caused an incalculable loss to France; for even had these artisans no other property than their personal industry, yet the republic has, by sacrificing them in the field of battle, suffered an immense loss of capital; since it is impossible to contest the just observation made by Adrian Lezay two years ago, that “the expenses of every apprenticeship are in fact a *capital* laid out on the individual himself, from which to derive a future revenue, in the same manner as if it were laid out in the purchase of property; and the *industrious* man is in fact a capitalist, whose stock in trade, intimately combined with his intellect, is embodied therewith, and resides within himself.”

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taken as an example. Her population is estimated at precisely half that of England alone: and yet it is more than doubtful whether the Irish create, consume, and accumulate one fourth of the produce, in quantity or value, given by double their number of Englishmen; nor do they bring into the national treasury one twelfth part of what is received from the English themselves.

We shall see, in the following chapters, how far this industrious class is now diminished in France : we shall see, that while they were sent out to fight beyond the frontiers, the revolutionary axe within destroyed the heads of the manufactures, and most of the machines which multiply the productions of the hands employed. Nor can we, without a view of these facts, calculate the disastrous consequences of the destruction of men, of which we have been enumerating the causes.

But before we enter upon the losses of France, in the produce of her industry, in her machines which have been broken to pieces, or suffered to decay, and in the means of replacing them, let me declare the fears which have more than once made me hesitate whether I ought to pursue this work. Yes, I confess that I am uneasy lest this picture of the ever-increasing impoverishment of the French nation, and the future debility to which they are irretrievably condemned, should lull their neighbours in a dangerous security, with regard to the redoubled hazards they run at the present time. I fear, lest, in this false security, which so new a prospect may inspire, they should not be aware, that the less this nation are now employed in productive labour, the more they lose the habit of industry and of peaceful pleasures, and their disposition to economy—the more will war, adventure, and piracy become their predominant inclinations, and the characteristics of their new mode of existence.

Non erat his populus quem pax tranquilla juvaret  
Quem sua libertas in motis pasceret armis.      LUCAN.

Most assuredly had France even lost one half of her population capable of bearing arms, which is far from being the case, the remainder would have become more formidable to their neighbours in consequence of their want of employment and their poverty. Is it already forgotten, that the misery which followed the war of the succession, after the winter of 1709, was the true cause of the regeneration of the armies of Lewis XIV. by forcing men to enlist in crowds for the sake of a subsistence, which they could no longer procure elsewhere ? The circumstances are the same as far as regards the wretchedness of the people, which, if it does not constitute the strength, is at least the cause of the boldness and success of their present governors. As long as they shall suffer themselves to be led like sheep to slaughter, their masters will have many more men than are requisite to accomplish their vast projects of conquest and universal plunder.

I confess there no longer exists among them that military ardour which urged them forward on the plains of Châlons, and soon after gave birth to no less than fourteen armies. But of what importance is its decay ? Do not the successors of Robespierre possess his secret ? Formed in his school, are they not aware, that by handcuffing the requisition-men, and placing them between the guillotine and the enemy, the narrations of the veterans, the *esprit de corps*, the discipline, the martial music, the revolutionary hymns, the habit of facing danger, and the thirst of plunder, soon banish the idea of home and the wish to return, and through cowardice itself they become by



degrees intrepid warriors ? The Directory has a double interest in multiplying these levies, which are the only means of drawing their internal enemies into the field, and thus opposing them to the external. Could we even doubt that this is their policy, let us refer to the decree which has established a new mode of military organization, by the aid of which the government will at all times have *a million of soldiers* enlisted, and will raise 200,000 men for their present wants. To create a possibility of putting this levy in effect, it was necessary to annul the privilege granted to married men. "This *severe justice*," said the reporter, "will *oblige* the inhabitants of the country to *identify themselves with the government*. This was *necessary* for preventing corruptness and effeminacy from overwhelming with shame, and precipitating to destruction, the greatest nation on the face of the earth \*."

General Jourdan, who proposed this military conscription, expressed himself still more openly ; for he confessed, without hesitation, that the ancient *military ardour* of the French youth had *cooled*. If, however, nothing appeared easier to him than to *reanimate* it, and a fourth time to renew the revolutionary armies, this arises from his relying on the impoverishment of the nation, and on the coercive measures that have driven into the field the majority of those who have fallen in battle.

Although the youth have taken alarm and fled, although they mutilate themselves to evade this de-

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\* See the Moniteur of 29th September 1798, No. 353.

cree, or defy its enforcement \*, we may be certain, that, after having opposed to it their empty clamours, these proud republicans will submit to it with the most abject obedience. It remains to be discovered, whether the rest of Europe will consent to sanction it; for to restrain these soldiers, and retain them round their banners, they must be equipped and paid; and in this the republic can only succeed by the plunder of the nations she proposes to attack. This is her last and only resource. If they still permit her thus to become mistress of their finances, she will find more men than are requisite to inundate all Europe with their troops, and sooner or later to give the most fatal blow to those sovereigns who now think themselves most secure.

I shall often have occasion to recur to this important truth. It is now time to terminate this statement, which, however long it may appear, ought to be

\* The *Moniteur* of the 6th October, No. 15, contains a letter from Brussels, stating that "The young man who lately hung himself to avoid bearing arms against the enemies of the republic, is not the only one who has been deaf to the call of honour. Others, still more cowardly, have cut off the fingers of their left hand; and a still greater number endeavour to take refuge in an enemy's country."

While this was passing in Belgium, some young people at Paris presented a humble petition to the legislative body, describing the *misery* this new law gave birth to in their families; and supplicating them at least to annul its *retrospective* clauses, which subject to the enlistment those who, on the faith of the former law, have married since the 12th January 1798. In vain did they add, that many of them had since then *become fathers*. This did not prevent the Council from passing to the order of the day, or the Deputy Chabert from mounting the tribune, to announce to the allied powers, that *the youth of the republic wait but for a signal to buckle on their civic armour*.

The only exception hitherto admitted was in favour of that department, whose courage and whose resistance they still dread, notwithstanding the losses it has suffered; I mean La Vendée.

considered merely as containing general and preparatory hints, whose application will hereafter be apparent. If a numerous, an industrious, and a moral population, enjoying an easy subsistence, form the basis of the wealth of nations, and of the resources of their governments, it is easy to judge of the truth of the assertion of the Directory, that *the resources of the French republic are entire*. And however scandalous this imposture may appear, it has disgusted me less than the language they dared to hold four months before to the minister of war in the following terms : “ We are convinced of an *important truth*, which it is essential should be known—that France never had a war to sustain *less destructive* to her armies than the present.”

What ! A war which has set the world in a blaze, and covered all France with mourning ; a war for which the pen of history can find no other description but that of a *butchery* of mankind ; a war in which the French republic has only triumphed, by sacrificing more soldiers than all the coalesced powers together, and in which her national guards have *thrice renewed* her armies !—Such is the war to whose effects its conductors endeavour to blind the survivors, by coldly assuring them “ that France never had a *less destructive* conflict to sustain, and that *her resources are entire*.”

## CHAPTER III.

*Fallaciousness of the five Advantages which the Cultivators of Land expected to derive from the Revolution. Exorbitancy of the Land-tax. Vexations of the Garnisers. Increase of the Expenses of Cultivation. Fall in the Price of Land and its Produce. Scarcity of Hands. Rapid Decline of Agriculture. Wretchedness of the Inhabitants of the Country.*

VARIOUS are the accounts relative to the advancement or decay of agriculture in France since the commencement of the revolution. Many travellers and other writers have gone so far as to assert, that it is *in the most flourishing state, and that the soil has never been better cultivated* \*. The members of the two Councils, and all the official reports, assert that, on the contrary, it has rapidly declined during these two last years; that the profits of the farmers † are almost reduced to nothing; that they begin to feel extreme discouragement, and that they are totally

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\* See F. J. L. Meyer's *Fragmens sur Paris*, published in 1796, and translated from the German by General Dumouriez in 1798.

† The reader will perceive, in the progress of this chapter, that in France the most usual tenure is that of *métayers*, who advance a portion of the stock and all the other expenses of cultivation, and then divide the produce with the landlord in equal shares. The same tenure very generally prevails in the more expensive cultivation of the vineyard. Thus there are three classes of farmers: 1. Those who cultivate their own estates; 2. *Metayers*; and, 3. Tenants at rack-rent. It will appear, that the small number of the latter class is one of the causes of the low state of cultivation in France. T.

unable to pay either their rent or land-tax. Although comparative views of the produce itself are wanting to enable us to decide between these contradictory assertions, yet we have innumerable authentic documents, several symptoms and indications, and many certain facts, which may enable us to guess at those which are concealed.

Let us set out by a succinct description of the state of agriculture before the revolution, which is our only point of departure, or medium of comparison.

The soil has always been the principal source of the riches of France. It may, however, be discovered in M. Necker's work, wherein he has dilated with so much satisfaction on the great prosperity she enjoyed, that she does not regularly supply her inhabitants even with all the provisions necessary for their consumption; and we there find proof, that perfumeries, dried fruits, liquors, oils of Provence, brandies, and all the wines exported, were not on an average by any means sufficient to exchange against the corn, cattle, horses, and *raw produce, or primary commodities* \*, imported from foreign countries. It therefore

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\* By these terms are understood provisions, salt meat, leather, cheese, tobacco, wood of all kinds, flax, hemp, pitch, tar, coal, and even oil; for France exported much less of the fine oils than she imported of an ordinary quality, of which last the annual amount was from twelve to fifteen millions of livres.

As for raw silks, every thing proves that the quantity produced in France was sufficient for her consumption; and although she imported to the amount of about twenty-seven millions, she re-exported the whole after giving it three times its original value by converting it into manufactures. But it was not the same with regard to woollens, of which nearly an equal amount was annually imported. Although some light cloths were sent abroad, it is more than doubtful whether the common cloths purchased from other nations were not equivalent

appears, that a country, which, with the surplus of such produce as it can spare, cannot procure all those it needs, and which are indispensably necessary, ought not to be called *the most fertile and the most agricultural in Europe*, as M. de Calonne has asserted.

It is no less true, that the immense balance that country annually received by means of its commerce, and which it owed solely to its maritime colonies, has, in this respect, deceived many other writers. Grotius, referring no doubt to the fruits of Touraine, and to certain precious wines very famous all over the world, called it *the finest country next to heaven*. Its present legislators are daily repeating that *its soil is more fertile than that of any other country in Europe* \* ; and in all ages its inhabitants have assumed the title of the *agricultural* nation (or the nation of farmers), in gratitude to that genial climate which has so often and so rapidly compensated the faults and errors of their governors.

The United States of America are an eminently agricultural nation, for they produce a great surplus

to the fine cloths disposed of to them; so that the importations of raw wool may be considered as one of the agricultural productions for which France depended on her neighbours.

If we were investigating the balance of the imports and exports of Great Britain, we ought not to neglect the value of the raw materials for manufacturing woollens, of which, to the amount of 6,000,000*l.* sterling are annually disposed of to other nations. Perhaps, too, we ought to include the salt fish exported. Fisheries are, in fact, no other than the tillage of the sea; for if those Englishmen who carry their cod to the coasts of the Mediterranean, and who are employed in fetching it from Newfoundland, remained upon their native island, they would contribute to produce the corn and spirituous liquors which England now takes in exchange for her fish from the rest of Europe.

\* Talot. Sitting of the 1st February 1798.

of provisions. The same may be said of Hungary, Sicily, Poland, and Prussia; but I confess I cannot comprehend why France should be called *the most agricultural country of Europe*, unless we are to understand by this, that she may at some future period be able to supply her own consumption.

The obstacle which prevented her inhabitants from displaying all the riches of the soil, was principally the unequal taxation, which pressed most on the cultivators of land, and augmented in an arbitrary ratio in proportion as they increased their stock of cattle, or their number of ploughs. In process of time this system gave them such a passion for hoarding \*, that the majority preferred keeping their money idle to laying it out in improvements, and feared to bestow on their land that cultivation, without which it was impossible to render it pro-

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\* We have seen a new proof of the continuance of this ancient practice at the time of calling in the gold coin during the administration of M. de Calonne, and particularly when the church-lands were put up to sale. A great number of farmers then became purchasers, and a great quantity of specie, till then locked up as a useless treasure in the coffers of the yeomanry, who were not suspected of possessing any property, suddenly came out, and entered into circulation. If this was so under the former government, it is easy to imagine how much this passion for hoarding must have increased under a system of compulsory paper circulation, of requisitions, of forced loans, and of confiscations. Of this Lecouteulx complained in the sitting of the 20th July 1798, though he disguised it under a new name. "I will not conceal," said he, "that in France money is now extremely disseminated. This dissemination arises, in a great measure, from the reservation of a certain sum which every one thinks it his duty to retain, through a fear of not being able to raise, when necessary, the money he may have occasion for." This was plainly declaring, that in the fear of new plunder, every one was collecting and hoarding the only species of property which could be concealed from the plunderer.

ductive. Another cause which arrested their progress was, that the consumers who resided in the towns, although very numerous, were generally poor. For as production will always pursue a ratio compounded of the number of consumers and their ability, if the purchasers cannot offer a good price, cultivation will dwindle away, or, at least, remain stationary.

Another reason why the progress of agriculture in France was never proportionate to the fertility of the soil, the temperature of the climate, the activity of the inhabitants, and their flourishing population, was, that in all periods their national character led them rather into the luxury of decoration than that of consumption, which last alone is favourable to agriculture, or contributes to the strength of a state. In fact, every thing depends on reproduction, every thing ends in it, and the whole system of political economy consists in a circular process, of producing in order to consume, and consuming much in order to reproduce still more. It is by consumption and reproduction that the revenue of a sovereign is perpetuated. The more his subjects consume and reproduce, the more profit does he derive from this double increase, of both which he receives his share.

Eleven years ago one of the French economists, who has most vaunted the agricultural power of his country, asserted, " that the annual produce of England has been calculated with great accuracy at 2,235 millions of livres; that, together with those of Scotland and Ireland, they cannot be less than three milliards; and that the produce of France, computed in the same manner, has been valued, at the least, at



3,200 millions \*." He added, that these calculations had been made *with great skill and judgment*. But as he did not point out the data, I shall not pledge myself to their truth, although they appear to me very nearly to approximate to it, for the period when they were made. But admitting their accuracy, what would be the result? Only, that the subjects of his Britannic Majesty, notwithstanding their gloomy climate, obtain fifteen sixteenths of the produce drawn from the soil of France, by a population said to be more than double their number †, and notwithstanding the great

\* See Dupont de Nemours's *Lettre à la Chambre du Commerce de Normandie*.

† It is for the sake of pursuing the hypothesis of Dupont and his colleagues throughout, that I adopt their account of the comparative population of the two empires.

Nothing can be more curious than the manner in which, while swelling out their own population, they discover the means of reducing that of the two islands, so as to give more effect to their favourite contrast between the *great* and the *little* nation. Lecouteulx has discovered, that it is merely by *exaggeration* that the population of the latter has been stated at *ten* millions; that it is not equal to one third of that of France; and that its territory is not equal to one *sixth* with respect to the *extent* cultivated.

It might be inquired, to what new map this statesman has applied his compasses, and whether he has referred to the writings of Templeman and Necker? from which it appears, that the superficial extent of the two islands is to the kingdom of France as 99 to 131. It is true, there is the strongest reason to believe that Templeman is considerably mistaken, particularly with regard to the northern provinces both of Scotland and Ireland; and that the real proportion of the two empires is only as 83 to 130. But supposing, that after her continental conquests the superficial extent of the republic should now be to that of the two British islands as 160 to 80, it remains to be considered, whether eight acres well manured, and cultivated in an intelligent manner, will not produce as much as sixteen indifferently managed, and of which one third every year lies fallow. The *cahiers* of the noblese of Blois asserted, that, acre for acre, English land produced forty-eight measures of corn, while that of France only yielded eighteen. I am far from wishing to rely on so vague an assertion, but I shall appeal to the calculations of Arthur Young, as a good authority in this respect. After having com-

extent of that country, and the vast variety of produce to which its boasted climate is adapted. From this statement alone it is easy to pronounce which of the two nations is the most *agricultural*.

Here an important observation occurs relative to the comparative resources each government can draw from agriculture; namely, that as the revenue of the sovereign only consists of the surplus of the annual reproductions, if *twenty-five* millions of individuals are obliged to subsist on a produce estimated at 3,200 millions of livres, they will have much less to spare for their sovereign than *ten* millions of men with a produce amounting to three milliards.

But let us quit all these preliminary observations on the condition of farmers of all classes in France

pared the different modes of cultivation and the quantities produced, "I should be justified," says he, "in proportioning the corn produce of England in general, compared with that of France, as 28 to 18. I am well persuaded, such a ratio would be no exaggeration. The comparative importance of a country producing twenty-eight bushels per acre in lieu of eighteen, is prodigious."

In short, Lecouteulx will permit me to remind him, 1st, That Lavoisier has asserted, that *not even two thirds of the surface of France are cultivated*. 2dly, That Neufchateau, the minister, has lately reproached the French with *their baneful fallows, which render one third of their extensive territory barren*; by which that minister means, no doubt, *a third of the two thirds cultivated*. 3dly, That the best maps, and the writings of the best informed men, show, that the forests, both public and private, occupy a sixth, or at least a seventh of the territory of France. 4thly, That the English reap corn from the surface of those lands whose bowels supply them with coal, which corresponds with the fire-wood of France.

As to the population of the two islands, this is not the place to enter the lists with those who, like Lecouteulx and St. Aubin, are always repeating with so much emphasis, that it is *under* ten millions. It is enough to say, there is the best reason to believe that it amounts to between fifteen and sixteen, of which Ireland contains four and a half, Scotland one and a half, and Wales 80,000.

before the revolution, and let us proceed to the principal advantages they expected to derive from it.

The first, and no doubt the most important, was the abolition of *tithes*; a tax which, of all others, is the most inimical to the progress of agriculture. It would, in fact, be difficult to contrive a tax more directly prejudicial, than that which prevents the draining of marshes, the clearing of new lands, the enclosure of commons, and presses with peculiar rigour on those lands which require the largest capital and the greatest quantity of labour. Of tithes it may be justly said, that they lay a fine on improvements, and set the infant at variance with its nurse; and that those who come to collect the tenth sheaf seem annually to admonish the farmer, *Beware not to make your lands productive*. We may add, that by demanding every where indiscriminately a tenth of the *raw* produce, the tithe-collector, in fact, generally takes a fourth, or at least a fifth of the net profits, and that by exacting an equal portion of the fruits of the most fertile land, whose cultivation requires but little expense; and of that which is more expensive, it often happens, that of the first only a seventh or an eighth of the net produce is taken, while of the latter a fourth, a third, and sometimes one half is levied. To be freed then from tithes, appeared an immense relief for the French farmer: but before we take it for granted that he is really wholly liberated from this tax, we must recollect, that the famous decree which *secularized* France, left the support of the clergy entirely at the charge of the people;

whence it appears, that those parishes which have preserved their religion, and priests to perform its functions, are obliged to support them as before. The only difference consists, 1st, In the priests now receiving in threshed corn what was formerly given them in sheaves: 2dly, In this stipend, which might then be demanded, being now a voluntary gift; which has converted the constitutional clergy into a new kind of mendicants, asking charity in lieu of giving alms. Experience will teach us, whether religion and its ministers will not become the victims of this new order of things, and whether the French nation is sufficiently attached to divine worship, to give a regular, a voluntary, and a decent salary to their priests, like the Dissenters in England, and all the Christian sects of the United States of America. In the latter case, this general and gratuitous contribution will cost them precisely as much as the tithes from which they thought themselves delivered. In fact, Syeyes proved to the Constituent Assembly, that the annual produce of the tithes amounted only to seventy millions \* ; and this is precisely the sum at

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\* On the 31st May 1798, the Deputy Bruslé, when insisting on the greatness of the relief arising to the people from the suppression of tithes, estimated them at seventy-two millions. This valuation is pretty near that presented to the Constituent Assembly by Dédelay, who seems to have made himself master of the subject. He asserted, that their net produce amounted, at the utmost, to sixty or sixty-five millions; and hence it followed, that the general maintenance of the clergy cost the nation only at the rate of two livres ten sous, or three livres per head. Should this statement appear to some readers below the truth, let them remember, that the rate varied in different parts of the kingdom from the seventh to the thirty-second part of the raw produce; that several vineyards paid as little as half a crown per acre; that oil and wine, which form the principal produce of Dauphiny and Provence, paid nothing; and that

which they paid the stipend of the clergy, even after reducing those of the bishops with a degree of parsimony irreconcilable either with the hierarchy or the discipline of the Romish church. Would it not have been far wiser to have converted the tithes into a pecuniary aid demandable by law, like that which is daily gaining ground in England, without the particular intervention of government? The minister who should succeed in procuring the sanction of law for this measure, would indeed be a benefactor to agriculture, especially should he be able to secure to the clergy of the country, both for the present and the future, a respectable establishment that will enable them to fulfil their important duties. As to the French nation, one circumstance peculiar to them would seem to show, that tithes were much less prejudicial in France than elsewhere. Their inclination to enjoy the present without regard to the future, is well known; and the class of farmers were so far from being exempt from this baneful disposition, that they were always anxious to derive from the earth the species of produce which they could most speedily convert into money, and generally put in tillage a much greater quantity of land than was proportioned to the extent of their meadows. Hence enlightened men who travelled in France said, *there would be more corn if there were fewer fields*. Now the

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even where it was heaviest, it was scarcely ever rigorously exacted. Its name then was very improperly chosen, since the *maximum* of the sum annually collected from the whole country amounting but to seventy-two millions, it only took the forty-fourth part of the whole produce, which was estimated at 3,200 millions, as has been already explained.

tithes indirectly contributed to oppose this tendency, because meadow land pays a much smaller proportion of its net produce than arable. No one, however, adduced this important consideration when the tax was attacked; and scarcely was it suppressed before the plough destroyed the most excellent meadows. There is nothing marvellous in this land producing abundant harvests of corn, but the period is approaching when these thoughtless speculations will be severely repented of\*.

The second advantage conferred on the agriculture of France, was the suppression of the excise (*droits d'aide*) levied on wines and brandies. Such were the golden expectations founded on this relief, that every one hastened to plant new vineyards, especially at the commencement of the paper circulation, which gave a temporary stimulus to many enterprises and speculations; but as they wanted the necessary capital for carrying on this species of culture, which requires more hands, and consequently larger disbursements than any other, they were soon compelled to neglect it†. Those who had the best oppor-

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\* It is said, that good English farmers can, at first sight, discover the age of a meadow; and that they value it at a rent not merely proportioned to the fertility of the soil, but to its having been in that state twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years.

† To this Dupont alluded in the following sentence: "The cultivation of the vine is considerably extended by the suppression of the excise (*droits d'aides*). We now every where behold hills hitherto naked and barren converted into luxuriant vineyards."

It was however much less important to extend its cultivation, than to proportion it to the capitals employed; for the same deputy who had just attested this fact, exaggerating it, as was his custom, candidly added, "But the soil that bears these new riches, this happy source of revenue, no longer enjoys the same capital as formerly; it enjoys a capital diminished perhaps to *one third*, or at least to *half* its former magnitude."

tunity of observation, agree that the vineyards have suffered considerably, that they neither receive the frequent cultivation, nor the continual attention they require; that in many parts the proprietors neglected to replace the plants that had decayed; and that several purchasers or renters of confiscated lands had cut down the vines *en ruine* \*. Neither ought we to forget, that, under pretext of relieving the distress of the hospitals, a duty was lately imposed on wines and other liquors on entering Paris, which is decorated with the title of *octroi de bienfaisance*, or a grant of benevolence, and which will doubtless soon be extended to the provincial towns. Although this tax has already excited great murmurs among the people, it is one of those of which the advantages are most calculated to counterbalance its inconveniences, and perhaps it will render an essential service to the agriculture of France, should it contribute to restrain the cultivation of the vine, and to confine it, by degrees, to those districts which are best calculated for its production.

The third advantage was the abrogation of the *feudal rights*; an advantage of inestimable value, had it been accompanied with the same moderation as in Denmark, or that of which Lewis XVI. had himself given an example in his own domains. But the French legislators, ever hurried on by the impetuosity which characterizes their nation, committed acts of in-

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\* This process produces a more abundant vintage; but it exhausts the vines, and is never adopted, except in the year preceding that when the plants are pulled up, and the land converted to other branches of cultivation.

justice equally glaring with those they were endeavouring to correct. Under pretext of destroying every vestige of the ages of barbarism, and re-establishing property on its just basis, they gave it a shock which agriculture will long continue to feel. Let us not suffer ourselves to be imposed on by the long and pompous catalogue of feudal rights which they have suppressed. The most tyrannical of them had so totally fallen into disuse, that the people had even forgotten their names; and as to that of *morte-main*, which has made so much noise, it only existed in Mount-Jura, where this oppression could only extend to 10,000 individuals at the utmost. I do not however deny that the suppression of many of these rights, and particularly those of personal service, was a real relief to some districts: but it must be observed, that to give it a character of general alleviation in the eyes of the people, it was thought necessary to include the enfranchisement of the *domaines congéables* (tenancies at will), and *ground-rents*. These ground-rents, called *champarts*, payable annually either in kind or money, which were the price of the grant to those who originally offered to clear the land, were one of the most favourable institutions for the progress of agriculture. But we ought not to forget, that after having stigmatized and suppressed these *ground-rents* as a remnant of feudal barbarism, and after suffering the people to enjoy, during several years, this pretended benefit, their representatives have been these two years endeavouring to deprive them of it, under pretext that *ground-rents* are not expressly named in the decrees of suppression. It is the poverty of the finances that has urged them



to this gross imposition. As soon as they had sold the greater part of the national domains, from which they were due, they revived their claim to them in favour of the national treasury, and attempted to exact them from the yeomanry, who thought themselves delivered from the burden. The latter have, however, obstinately persisted in refusing to pay them, and still more to redeem them, as the minister Ramel, who expected thence to derive an immense sum of money, had the effrontery to propose\*. This contest is still

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\* The prospect of the sums this redemption would bring in, furnished Ozun with an excellent argument not to grant that minister the other taxes he solicited. On the 30th May 1798, he thus expressed himself: "A good government, says Forbonnais, ought not to impose taxes when it may recover the possession of property. *Recover yours.* Let us demand the ground-rents *excepted* in the law of the 17th July 1793, from the general suppression of the feudal rights;"—he added, "that this measure would produce 100 millions in specie, and above 300 millions in receipts for the yet unannihilated stock called the consolidated third."

This was precisely what Ramel hoped when he solicited the renewal of these rents. The difficulty consists in discovering the *exception* in the famous decree of the 4th August 1789. That decree is so explicit, that the legislative body of the year v. could not discover the smallest ambiguity, although strongly desirous of repairing the injustice, and although the Directory united with them with an energy proportioned to their necessities.

In the mean while the country people do not take the trouble either to pore over the laws which are the subject of dispute, or to examine whether it be true, that these ground-rents had no mixture whatever of feudalism. They have discontinued the habit of paying them, and they are enraged to hear of their representatives appointing a committee to investigate the propriety of re-establishing them. They even openly declare they will join the standard of royalty if their rulers thus persist in establishing, by degrees, all the burdens from which they thought themselves delivered for ever by its abolition. Such, however, is the inference we may draw from the opinion which the new Deputy Crevelier gave his colleagues on the 23d June 1798: "The proposal to re-establish the rents called *rentes foncières* (or ground-rents), again brought forward in this tribune, has spread an alarm among the farmers. The mere existence of the committee nominated for this purpose is, in some measure, a *public calamity*;

undecided. If the country people succeed, as is highly probable, the result will be a considerable alleviation for one class of cultivators, and the ruin of another class of proprietors. But such an invasion of one of the most sacred of landed properties will ultimately prove rather prejudicial than advantageous to agriculture.

The fourth advantage was the suppression of the exclusive right of killing game. It is impossible to justify the total indifference of the old government to the devastations those animals committed; and though these were inconsiderable, except in the vicinity of the *capitaineries royales*, or royal rangerhips, every friend to the people must have applauded the sentiment which induced the Constituent Assembly to put a stop to that abuse; nor is it without reason that Leconteulx has lately reminded the farmers of the *injury* formerly done by the game. But it may be asked, does not the sportsman now inflict on them an almost equal *injury*? For since this privilege has been ex-

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since the friends of liberty are not without uneasiness, and the representatives of the people are daily exposed to the most horrid calumnies, for having in a manner renewed a proposition *rejected* by the Fructidorian legislative body. This proposition, even supposing it to be *just*, is in reality *impolitic* and *ill-timed* in the present state of France. It may, it *must* be useful to the King of Blankenburg, and the followers of Babœuf. I say still more; the adoption or rejection of this proposition which I oppose, will determine which faction shall carry the elections of the year vii."

Such is the present state of this great contest. We have every reason to believe that the present legislators will maturely deliberate before they insist on the payment of the *ground-rents*, and that the inhabitants of the country will think twice before they purchase exemptions for the benefit of the republican government, considering the evident danger of having again to pay them whenever monarchy is restored.

tended to every one without distinction, and since there are no persons employed as game-keepers to prevent abuses, it is exercised even before the corn is cut. Of this the minister of the interior complained to the central administrations, reproaching them with the *great damage* suffered by the crops in consequence of the non-execution of the game-laws, and urging them to fix the periods when hunting and shooting are permitted. Independent of this damage, it is much to be feared that the effects of the diminution of the game will be, in some measure, counteracted by the multiplication of wolves \*, which are as injurious to the flocks in mountainous countries as the game was formerly to the crops upon the plains. No one will deny that so rapid a multiplication of wolves has partly arisen from the suppression of the game-keepers, who were at the same time keepers of the forests, where it was their business to destroy these enemies of agriculture. I have elsewhere spoken of the plunder and devastation to which the woods were subject after the decree which repealed the ancient game-laws. This ought to be taken into the account when we are weighing the advantages of this decree, which is represented to the people as an inestimable benefit. Nor ought we to forget that the same observations apply to their deliverance from the royal rangerhips as to the *ground-rents*, and that the new committee of

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\* The following is an extract from the last report on this subject by Daubermesnil, on the 24th September 1798: " In the last year (the year vi.) 5,351 wolves were destroyed: but notwithstanding this, the same ravages continue, the same misfortunes happen, and the same complaints are repeated."

finances has ventured to propose the re-establishment of the exclusive privilege of the chase. It is true, this was opposed by others, who *invoked the immortal law* of the 4th August 1789, and declared, that the very idea of this *privilege* gave birth to *innumerable painful reflections*. But although the legislative body has hitherto rejected *every idea of selling for money the exercise of a right common to all men*, we may be certain they will speedily recur to it, whether to procure a new source of revenue, to re-establish the natural protectors of the forests, or to have a pretext for indirectly disarming a certain class of the people, to whom, whether able to purchase them or not, the *immortal law* of the 4th August so imprudently granted the liberty of using and keeping arms.

The fifth and last *advantage* which agriculture derived from the revolution was that of the abolition of the *corvées* or statute-work, a method, equally unjust and extravagant, of making and keeping the public roads in repair. M. Necker values the work hereby exacted of the classes of men who were subject to it at twenty millions of livres. When the suppression of this vexatious tax was finally decreed, cries of joy resounded from all parts. This, however, was a measure which had been long before prepared and begun under Lewis XVI. ; but as the Constituent Assembly omitted to supply its place by a pecuniary aid, or by the establishment of turnpikes (*barrières*), the result was so great a decay, or rather such a destruction of the bridges and causeways, and of the great roads, that many of the latter became impassable. As the account I have to give of these may ap-

pear exaggerated, I shall confine myself to copying that addressed to the whole nation by the Directory on the 16th December 1797 to demonstrate to them the important interest they had in repairing the highways *themselves*:—"For several years nothing has been done in this respect, nor has any thing been paid. Most of the highways are, in many parts, ruinous or impassable. Travellers, couriers, and diligences have, in many places, the greatest difficulty to proceed. *The stagnation of commerce has been the baneful consequence.* This evil at first arose merely from a neglect, then very easy to be corrected, had it been attempted in time; but in the present state no ordinary means will be sufficient. In so great a difficulty a great effort is necessary. The Directory therefore proposes to all the citizens to *subscribe*, according to their ability or their patriotism, to this grand object, either in kind or in money. It is with confidence they provoke this act of public spirit so natural to a free people. Public spirit ought, in the French nation, to produce prodigies superior to all those recorded in ancient times. Rome, while free, astonished the world by the magnificence of her aqueducts and public roads—France, equally powerful, and *better constituted* than the Roman republic, ought also to excel Rome in the care she will take of her public works. To destroy the roads of an extensive empire is to cut the veins of Hercules; and to that state France is almost reduced. But the French Hercules is about to wield his nervous arms. The Executive Directory are addressing citizens who will *listen* to their exhortation,

nor will a single individual be found who shall be deaf to their voice."

But the Directory was so little *listened to*, that throughout the whole republic only two communes felt the importance of yielding to this *appeal*. That of Colonges boasted—"that they had repaired five leagues of road in less than three days, without costing a single halfpenny to government;"—and that of Verneuil subscribed for the labour of a certain number of days; but the public prints have not informed us whether these subscriptions were realized \*.

\* In one of his last circular letters, the minister of the interior has nevertheless thanked *some parts of France* for having seized this opportunity of showing their patriotism; and he assures them, that if, in lieu of being *partial*, the effort had been *general*, it would have repaired the breach in the public works arising from several years of neglect. After having reproached the people both with this *neglect*, and their *apathetic indifference*, that minister upbraids them above all—"with endeavouring to *evade* the barriers or turnpikes, newly established on the great roads, and *loudly clamouring* against the first experiments of the new tax. In fact," adds François de Neufchâteau, "this duty, far from being a burden to the citizens, is a real *benefit*; for it supplies the means of keeping up the great roads without having recourse to the *corvée*."—This paternal reproof concluded with a quotation, from the words of a *philanthropist*, who, when contemplating the roads constructed by the *corvée*, exclaimed, *I tread upon the blood of the people*.

To supply its place, the Directory have now established on the roads of France about 1,200 turnpikes, where a toll is beginning to be collected, from which they expect a considerable revenue, after paying the expenses of their establishment, and the salaries of the collectors. Although unanimously decreed immediately after the 18th Fructidor, this toll was then only consented to *in principle*, and it was when they came to *organize this principle*, that the people and the opposition exclaimed so loudly:—"What!" said Julien Souhait, on the 3d November 1797, "because George and the English aristocrats, and Belgic aristocrats, have chosen to establish turnpikes, shall their example and their will prevail in this assembly, and become, *in despite of ourselves*, the law of the French nation?"—His colleague Marbot did not confine himself to declamations against England, but artfully availing himself of a clause of the decree, which enacted, that the new tax should only be established on the *roads that were in*

Indignant at seeing the degeneracy of public spirit vie with the deterioration of the roads, the Directory thought it their duty to show themselves like the French *Hercules*, and to employ force where persuasion failed. Hence the inhabitants of Paris received an order to work upon the roads within their district; and this order, addressed to the stationary national guard, expressly declared that *those who should fail would be brought before the tribunal of correction*. It is not easy to conceive the surprise of these proud republicans and defenders of their country, on beholding themselves thus suddenly reduced to the dilemma of being condemned to work at the *corvées*, or sent to the *house of correction*. Their outcry was so general, that the Directory, fearing a mutiny in the Fauxbourgs, immediately wrote to the police—"that they were astonished to observe the *civic invitation* they had given to

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*repair*, he ascended the tribune, and expressed himself thus: "The information I have received at the office of the minister of the interior, proves that only one tenth of the roads of France are in this condition. Only one tenth therefore of the duty will be collected; that is, two millions in lieu of twenty, a sum which will be far from sufficient to keep the roads in repair."

To obviate this difficulty, they have established turnpikes on all the roads indiscriminately, whether *in repair* or not; and in consequence of this modification of the first law, the produce of the receipts expected from the toll stands in the presumptive revenue of the year VII. not as twenty, but as thirty millions. It is true, that to reach this sum, even in prospect, it has been necessary at once to lay the tax at an enormous rate. But when we consider how the number of travellers will be reduced in consequence of the tax, it is evident this burden will bear principally on the carriage of produce brought to market by farmers. We ought not therefore to be surprised, if, as the minister now complains, the country people *clamour loudly against these first attempts, if the enemies of the public good have seized this opportunity to MURMUR, and if some attempts have been made to evade the law, whether by using by-roads, or by going across the fields*.

the people converted into a *penal law*."—This retraction had so good an effect, that a few days afterwards the twelve municipalities of Paris, with the central administration of the department of the Seine at their head, went out on the road leading to Orleans, to *work* at repairing the highways\*. It must indeed have been a very curious sight for the neighbouring peasantry, who, with folded arms, beheld the magistrates, artists, jewellers, and literati of the capital of the empire, working with pick-axes on the public road. Time will show whether this kind of *corvée*-work can be of equal value with that which has been suppressed, and whether there will not long be cause to lament, with Dupont, that the revolution has thus *transported privileges*.

Having now taken a survey of the effects of the five great benefits which the country people expected to obtain, let us next examine the disastrous consequences of the first blow which agriculture received when it was decreed that three fourths of the contributions should be levied upon landed property.

It was also to the *wise and luminous views* of the Constituent Assembly, that the economists owed this great victory, by means of which all the productions of the earth were threatened with being taxed at their very source. I say *threatened*, because it was never put in force, nor ever can be, as the Deputy Heurtault declared to the economists, conjuring them not to render *the debtors to the public treasury insolvent*.

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\* See the Moniteur of the 16th March 1798.



Dédelay united with him in demonstrating that this would be to decree the ruin of the *great manufactory of agriculture*: "To paralyse," said he, "this vast manufactory of every species of riches, is to drain at their sources the channels that give them life. To reduce the labourer to mere necessaries, is to suspend all the effects of his industry; it is to stifle all its germs."

How exactly the first of these predictions has been fulfilled is well known. To appreciate the enormity of the contributions which are, nevertheless, still exacted from the land-owners, we should know the value of their net income, than which nothing can be more difficult to ascertain, because all the French writers who have treated of this subject, confound what remains for the farmer after the reimbursement of his expenses, with the net income of the land-owner, consisting of the rent which the landlord would receive without farming the land himself. Even the celebrated Lavoisier, who was appointed by the Constituent Assembly to investigate this subject, did not divide these two distinct branches of income, and yet he asserted *with confidence*, that they did not exceed 1200 millions when the price of corn is twenty-four livres the septier (of five bushels). He very justly, however, took the price of corn in France as the basis of his calculations; because in estimating the territorial revenue, or whole agricultural income of that country, not by the actual rent of the land, but by the net profit of the farmers, whether they cultivate their own land, or on joint account with the

landlord, it follows that this profit must vary considerably according to the increase or diminution of the market price of the crops. In a word, the price of corn is the true measure for valuing this agricultural income: an observation which it is important constantly to keep in view.

The average of the various calculations of the net agricultural income of the kingdom, deduced in this manner, was 1100 millions. This I shall adopt, the better to follow all the hypotheses of those whom I shall have occasion to quote, and who have set out from this as an almost certain datum. Yet I confess I have some difficulty in conceiving how the whole territorial and agricultural revenue should not exceed that sum in so populous and so rich an empire as France then was. When we reflect on the great extent of her vineyards, on whose cultivation more attention was bestowed than in any other country of Europe, and whose net produce was generally double of that of the best corn lands, I am almost disposed to think that the net revenue of the land-owners, properly so called, must alone have amounted to near 1100 millions. This conjecture acquires additional strength, if we consider that in consequence of the detestable institution of the *métayers* or farmers, on joint account with their landlords, who take half the produce in kind, the bulk of the landholders insensibly combined to exact from their estates the greatest possible profits, without perceiving that it would rather have been their interest to let them, and thus to leave the farmer not merely an equal share of the gross produce, but an equal portion of the clear profits, as is

practised in England\*. Hence I conclude, that the French calculators must have committed some error, when they estimated the territorial rental and agricul-

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\* It is a well-known fact, that, all other circumstances equal, an estate in France that produced on an average a crop of a certain value, was let at a much higher rent, and for a shorter term, than an estate in England, which would require the same stock, and the same expenses of cultivation, and whose produce would be of the same value. The difference was still greater with regard to those provinces of France, justly called the provinces of *slight cultivation* (*petite culture*), where the *métayers* only received (for their labours, their expenses, and their profits) one half of the raw produce, whereas in England farmers get nearly three fourths. It is there calculated, that the produce being divided into four nearly equal parts, two of these pay the tithes, the poor-rate, the expenses, the feed, and the wear and tear of the farming implements, as well as the interest of money, and the wages of the farmer's servants and labourers. The third constitutes the rent of the landlord, who is chargeable with the land-tax. The fourth is the net profit of the farmer, out of which he and his family must subsist, and derive any augmentation his capital may require. This rule, no doubt, is liable to a great number of exceptions, according to local circumstances, and as more or less of the land is in pasture. Here however it is sufficient to prove that it does not apply to France, since Mr. Arthur Young informs us, that seven eighths of the land not cultivated by the land-owners themselves were cultivated by *métayers*, who made one half of the advances in cattle, and yet only received one half of the gross produce for their labour and their advances. It is asserted, that before the revolution the major part of the land-owners began to perceive that this execrable system, absolutely unknown in England, and which has been driven out of Scotland, was no less injurious to the landlord than to the *métayers*. Unfortunately, since the reign of assignats it has become still more general in France, merely because the landholders having been paid their rents in a fictitious medium, or not being paid at all, they have endeavoured to follow the example of the government, by paying themselves with their own hands in real value, that is, by letting their farms on this kind of tenure. However, I must confess that Mr. Young appears to have exaggerated the number of them, when he supposes them to constitute seven eighths of the land not cultivated by the proprietors themselves. If these last occupy one third, as he states, I am disposed to believe the remainder to be nearly equally divided between these *métayers* and farmers. It is in consequence of the small number of the latter, and of the hard conditions imposed on them, that I have adopted the sum of 1100 millions as the territorial rental of France. But I consider it only as the income of the landholders, whether they cultivated their estates themselves, or by

tural income of the kingdom at only 1000, or 1100, or 1200 millions: yet even of that sum it fell short, if we may believe most of the parliaments, particularly those of Grenoble and Toulouse, which in 1787 asserted, in the most positive manner, that the total amount of the taxes being 600 millions, exceeded two thirds, and even amounted to *three fourths of the whole territorial income*. This was reducing it to 800 millions, which was the old valuation of Forbonnais. We should deviate less from the truth by adopting that of M. de Calonne, which raises the net income to 1500, or that of General Montesquieu, who valued it at 1250, which is about the supposed net agricultural revenue of England and Scotland, if we take the rent of the landholders at twenty-five millions sterling, and add an equal sum for the profits of the cultivators, whether proprietors, ~~farmers~~, or métayers.

We shall begin by observing, that in Great Britain the state only levies; on the former of these species of income, a land-tax of one twelfth, or two millions sterling; and even of this land-tax a considerable part is borne by houses, by the emoluments of public officers, and by other species of property

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farmers, métayers, or vintagers\*. However small the profits of these three descriptions of husbandmen, I think they may be fairly estimated at 2 or 300 millions; and this, according to my calculations, which I confess are scarcely less hypothetical than that which I here adopt, while I contest its accuracy, would raise the agricultural incomes of the land-owners and farmers of all descriptions within the former limits of France, to between 13 and 1400 millions.

\* This class of farmers also advance all the expenses of cultivation, and receive half the produce in kind. T.

not hitherto mentioned... It is true, that the more lenity has been shown in the first instance to the rent of land, the greater the advantage derived by the revenue from articles of consumption, which have been subjected to duties infinitely more considerable, though these however appear less burdensome, merely because they bear rather on expenditure than on income. Few persons, for instance, suspect, that under various forms, and by means of the excise, as well on malt liquors as on distilleries, barley alone produces to the revenue an annual sum of nearly three millions sterling. Another fact, which will appear still more extraordinary, and which will place in a very strong light the advantage of combining indirect taxation with a direct tax on land, is, that the King of Great Britain levies on the wines of Portugal consumed in England and Scotland, a tax which exceeds the sum total of the revenues of the kingdom where those wines are grown\*.

Pursuing a directly opposite line of conduct, and extracting contributions at the very source of territorial produce, the Constituent Assembly did not even deign to inquire the number of proprietors of land, whose subsistence the income they were about to tax

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\* These duties amounted in 1795 to 1,242,290*l.* which must far exceed the public revenue of the kingdom of Portugal.

We have every reason to believe that the sum total of the contributions paid by the people of Great Britain, including the tithes, the poor-rates, the expenses of collecting, and the provincial and local taxes, equals, or even surpasses, the sum total of the rental of land, houses, canals, forests, and mines: a fact which is sufficient to disconcert the propagators of the system of the *impôt unique* (on land), and considerably to embarrass the parliaments of Grenoble and Toulouse.

was previously to supply. That assembly thought themselves sufficiently powerful to lay upon these proprietors alone, all the burden of a vast number of other taxes, borne from time immemorial by the consumer, and to which the inhabitants of towns had been, by degrees, accustomed. All these they repealed, exchanging them for a single tax on land, and rejected with disdain the warning of a deputy who observed to his colleagues, that *their inexperience itself obliged them to preserve the model of the existing taxes*. But they were so poisoned with the *physiocratic* system, that they loaded the lands with an annual tax, which, with the expenses of collecting, and the additional *sous* for local expenses, amounts to nearly 300 millions.

The effects of this measure on the public revenue are well known, and every one perceives that their successors neither know how to abandon this contribution, nor how to supply its place. We shall presently see, that although, according to the decree, it ought not to have exceeded in principal or in additional *sous* a *fourth* of the net income, those who made this decree themselves acknowledge that it *exceeds a third*; that in *several places it is even more than half*\*; that in the department of the *Landes* it

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\* This is the valuation made by Harmand of the Meuse, who is the least addicted to exaggeration of all the members of the two Councils. After complaining of the great excess beyond the *maximum* fixed by law, he added—"Nor is it the majority, but, on the contrary, a very small minority of the contributors (in the proportion of two to seven), whose assessments are within the limits of the *maximum*."—The Deputy Rouvelet has lately confirmed this assertion (on the 10th. September 1798), when he declared—"that some de-

amounts to *four fifths*; that—" if implicit confidence is placed in the accounts furnished by each department, it would be *impossible* to make it amount to 180 millions \*;" and, in short, that all the endeavours that have been made to collect it only produce very  *slender sums*, and that there must be some *radical vice* in the new system †.

To discover that a *radical vice* existed, was far from difficult: it would have been much more important to have exposed this vice itself to view. It evidently consisted in the gross injustice of the pretended assessment (*cadastre*), which had been made only as a *provisory* measure.

The principle of the *progressive tax* having been proclaimed, and even decreed, at the time when these provisory assessments were made, all the great proprietors were overloaded, thereby to relieve the small ones. As the number of the latter in France is very considerable, as it had greatly increased since the sale of the church-lands, and before this new distribution occupied one third of the whole territory, it follows that the more they have reduced their quota the less advantage will the collector derive from pursuing them, so

partments pay a fourth, a third, and even *half* of the net income of the land, while others only pay a sixth, an eighth, or even a ninth part.

\* Report delivered on the 23d April 1797, by the committee appointed to examine the memorials of the departments that complained of being taxed beyond their strength.

† " When I behold our country villages converted into so many warlike posts, with each a *garrison* (to enforce the taxes), and yet all these efforts only produce *inconsiderable effects*, I perceive there must be some *radical vice* in the system of our taxation."—Bruslé's speech in the sitting of the 31st May 1798.

that he principally exercises his rigour on the contributor who has already been burdened beyond his ability. This is the true *radical vice* of the new system.

Another vice, no less radical than the former, is the alteration of the quota from year to year; and that those who regulate it inquire not so much what is the net income of each contributor, as to what faction he belongs. The consequence is, that the pretended assessment is merely a moving picture; and as a very intelligent writer has lately observed, *the purchaser of an estate now rated at ten thousand livres, has no security that next year it may not be rated at twenty or thirty thousand.*

We ought not, perhaps, so much to accuse the alternate reactions of different factions of this uncertainty, as the extravagance of the law which orders the assessors not to regulate the tax by the true rent that might be obtained for the land if let to farm; but to calculate the *net produce*, after deducting all expenses—an expression the most ambiguous that could have been employed, and which has admirably served those who have had the art to turn this calculation to their advantage, and to confound the ideas of the ignorant municipal officers appointed to perform this complicated operation\*.

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\* It is much less so in Great Britain, where only the rent is taxed, and where the bulk of the land being let, a view of the leases might be demanded once in every fifty or hundred years, and the assessments corrected according to these conclusive documents: but in a country where not one third of the lands are let, to tax an estate by the *net produce*, and to pretend to determine and to vary this from year to year, surely so gigantic an enterprise was truly worthy of the French economists. About a year ago the Deputy Saintherent accused the Constituent Assembly of having adopted ~~erroneous~~



Had the assessments been made with fairness and intelligence, had they been fixed in an invariable manner for a long series of years, and had each estate been taxed, not in proportion to its pretended net income, but according to the rent that could be procured for it, or without inquiring whether the proprietor was rich or poor, aristocrat or democrat, it would not have been *impossible* to levy a land-tax of 180 millions, although it would have been much wiser to have demanded at first only sixty, and to have increased it gradually one sous per livre every five years; whereas in the present state of affairs it is not within the power of man to levy more than a third of the 300 millions so unequally imposed. Every one will subscribe to this opinion when it is known that the most productive estates are still taxed by their net income in 1789, without considering that the suppression of the ground-rents has annihilated a great part of the income of many estates, and without considering that since that period the ravages of war, the want of cattle adapted to ploughing and drawing, the deficiency of manure, the diminution of the produce, the deterioration of the roads, the high interest of money, the scarcity of hands, the excessive price of labour, the impoverishment of the consumers, and lastly, the fall in the price of provisions,

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*data*, and loudly called for the *rectification* of the assessment books—“ This vast, this sublime measure,” said he, “ will be worthy of a place among the fasti of the republic; it will confer distinguished honour on the present sitting.”—But the Council, no doubt considering the step as too *vast*, passed to the *order of the day*, and the land-tax continued to be levied according to the old lists, of which the grounds are unanimously acknowledged to be *erroneous*.

which has been its unavoidable consequence, have reduced to one half the net income spoken of above. Of these allegations abundant proofs will be found in the reports of the two last years.

I shall begin with that of Défermont, when in January 1797 he solicited some alleviation for the western departments—"I come," said he, "to request that we may rescue from the oppressions of the garnisers those faithful inhabitants, who, after a four years absence from their homes, found them at their return reduced to a heap of ruins. Much has been said of the forced loan; this loan has been paid by them, and that in specie, while throughout the rest of the republic it has been paid only in paper. Columns of armed men advanced against their habitations, distrained their cattle, and, if the loan was not immediately paid, drove their beasts to be slaughtered at the camp. Such have been the proceedings, I do not say against the rebellious or subdued districts, but towards those inhabited by known and tried patriots."

A fortnight after the report here quoted, Goupilleau complained of a letter of the minister of justice, prohibiting the inhabitants of La Vendée from reclaiming any part of their losses. "*And since all their implements of husbandry,*" said this deputy, "*are destroyed, how is it possible they should labour?*"—This assertion of Goupilleau is the more worthy of credit, as he had recently been travelling over the country between the Loire and the ocean. "All their houses," continued he, "are destroyed; every thing is ruined; and the population, reduced to *little more than half,*

can only unite in presenting the republic with a heap of *ashes and dead bodies*."

In the same sitting Luminais deplored " the atrocious and gigantic system which had thus been conceived, arranged, and executed, of destroying throughout a space of 4 or 500 square leagues every thing which human industry had produced, and annihilating the human race there without distinction of innocent or guilty. To accomplish this object, which they have almost effected, it was necessary to commit those unheard-of crimes which will make future generations shudder with horror. Had no pillage been committed but that of the soldiers, the country would not have been ruined ; but a cloud of voracious locusts followed them under the name of civil commissaries, military commissaries, purveyors, store-keepers, victuallers. These seized the rich prey, and shared it among themselves in the name of the republic, to whom they assigned by far the smallest portion. *I estimate at more than a milliard (about forty millions sterling) the damages arising from the pillage of the moveable effects, from the burning of houses, the loss of crops, the desertion of lands and manufactures, the cutting down woods, and the carrying off cattle in the insurgent departments beyond the Loire\*.*"

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\* No regard however was then paid to this too faithful picture of the *damages* they had sustained ; and the committee of finances laid precisely the same tax upon them as if they had neither been *pillaged, nor burnt, nor depopulated, nor deserted*. Nor was it till they discovered, by experience, the absolute impossibility of making them pay taxes, for the payment of which no means existed, that they felt the propriety of granting them a discharge. Dubois, the reporter from the Council of Ancients, said, " That the inhabitants were very laborious and very industrious ; but that in the parts most ravaged they

This relates only to the four rebellious departments of Maine et Loire, La Loire inférieure, La Vendée, and Les deux Sèvres, a country which it was the more essential to preserve, as it was formerly one of the most agricultural parts of France. But these are not the only departments which the revolution has ruined. Let the reader contemplate the following statement of the general distress of all the departments given by Duprat two days after: "Remember," said he, "that it was in 1791 that the land-tax was fixed at 240 millions, and consider what has happened since that period. Notwithstanding the depreciation of paper, notwithstanding the facility of making payments, there are still many persons in arrear; there are departments where the contributions for the years II. III. and IV. have not yet been paid. If such was the fact at a period when agriculture was in a flourishing state, and commerce not *entirely annihilated*, what can be their present condition, when we have no commerce, when the soil is every where calling out for the hands that have been taken from it, when *part of the lands are not cultivated at all*, while the remainder only receive *half the manure and ploughing they require*, and when in general they yield *ONE THIRD less produce* than in 1791? It is evident that it will be *impossible* to raise

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still continued to dwell among heaps of ruins and of rubbish. Citizens representatives," added he, "the wounds of La Vendée are by no means *radically* cured, nor all its losses repaired."—They believed him on his word, and granted under the name of a relief (*dégrèvement*), a sum of three millions on the contributions of the year VI. They also released these four departments from a debt of nearly the same amount for the arrears of the year V. This decree was made on the 16th May 1798.

the land-tax, should it be attempted to increase it beyond the bounds of moderation."

It does not very clearly appear whether, in asserting a diminution of *one third* in the *produce* of land, the reporter meant the gross produce, or its value when converted into money : but it is natural to suppose that he combined the impoverishment of agriculture, which, through want of manure and ploughing, extracts less from the earth, with the impoverishment of the consumer, who can no longer afford to pay the same price for provisions. This last must, however, be the principal cause, since it is certain that for these two years the French have been able to supply themselves with provisions without importing any from abroad, which would have been utterly impossible if they had produced *one third less* than at a time when they did not supply their own consumption. It is no less true that the general mass of their crops has already decreased ; for Dupont, who was reproached with this diminution as one of the deplorable consequences of the land-tax, and who never omits to extenuate its effects, has not ventured wholly to deny it. *Our crops*, said he, on the 1st September 1797, *are not considerably diminished* ; and then he proceeded to accuse *the series of accidental misfortunes experienced by the republic, &c.* as their cause.

In calculating the amount of this diminution, we must remember, first, That the old population of France having been diminished by at least one eighth, the crops might decrease in the same proportion, without any scarcity being perceived : 2d, That the republic being in possession of the gra-

nary of the Low Countries, and of all the left bank of the Rhine, a country almost equally fertile, though not so well cultivated as that of Belgium, all the surplus of the territorial produce of these provinces, which is very considerable, has been received by the republic, where it has amply supplied the deficit : 3d, That no more flour has been exported to the colonies, where a quantity, amounting to several millions of livres, was formerly annually sent : 4th, That more than one half of the armies have subsisted at the expense of Germany and Italy : 5th, and lastly, That, owing to the favourableness of the seasons, the two last years have been remarkably fertile in corn. By combining all these circumstances, it is very easy to discover how France, while experiencing a considerable deficit in the mass of her produce, has been able to compensate it without having recourse to foreign countries, or even why she might now be able to export some little corn, although her produce had *sensibly* diminished.

Duprat rested this diminution on a fact which no one attempted to contest, and which throws new light on the extravagant basis adopted for the assessment of the land-tax. " In the department of the Landes," said he, " more than 400 landholders have brought appeals and solicited for abatements before the central administration ; and to prove the justice of their claims, which was agreed to by the municipal administrators, offered to abandon the whole of their income to the republic, if they could be suffered to enjoy a share equal to the amount of the tax ; in other

words, in lieu of being taxed *one fifth* of their income, *more than four fifths* were exacted."

This also is one of those allegations which will, at first sight, seem an unfounded exaggeration; and perhaps it would have appeared so to the author of this work, had he not seen it confirmed a year after in the answer given to a question by an anonymous banker, who inquired why the farmers can no longer pay either their rent or their land-tax. The reason assigned was, *that in lieu of a fifth or a fourth, the latter often absorbs four fifths of their net income\**. Such have been the results of the great and luminous conception of *provisory registering* all the lands of the republic, and taxing the departments in a ratio compounded of their population and extent, without regard to their barrenness or fertility.

Nor ought it to be supposed that the crying injustice of this republican assessment is entirely to be attributed to the party spirit, or the alternate revenge of the different assessors, sometimes against a particular commune, and sometimes against a particular individual. Long before the economists began to write, Colbert had, like them, formed an idea of a general survey of the whole kingdom, and pursued it with so much ardour, that he had the glory of completing it in some provinces. What is very remarkable, the commissioners of the *Grand Monarque* proceeded precisely in the same manner as those of the *Great Nation*, with this single difference, that the tax on many

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\* See the eleven questions stated in *L'Ami des Loix*, together with the answers. To both these I shall sometimes have occasion to refer.

estates, in lieu of only amounting to four fifths of the net produce, exceeded the whole; and the proprietors not being able to offer his Majesty to exchange the revenue he intended to leave them for that he took away, entirely abandoned their estates to the king. Colbert, however, to frustrate this attempt, published an edict, forbidding them to abandon their estates, unless they at the same time renounced all their other property. This fact deserves mention; to show that the tax on the *net produce*, and the *territorial cadastre (or census)*, are a kind of experiment which the financiers of France renew, like that of their *paper circulation*; about once in a century. It is true that Colbert, before he had time to complete his project, perceived that whole parishes had ceased to be cultivated, and therefore he immediately granted them extraordinary bounties to induce them to resume their cultivation. This minister, however, only crushed agriculture to encourage and advance commerce; but we have yet to learn where the Colberts of republican France, who have destroyed her commerce, will now find resources from whence to grant the bounties indispensably necessary to the restoration of agriculture.

I know that, from the impossibility of finding the money required, they have granted *dégrèvements* to several places, of which little has been said, lest others should avail themselves of it to ask for similar relief. In short, all the departments solicit a reduction of one half, and are not in a condition to pay the remainder with which they agree to be chargeable. It



is long since the committee of finances, of which Gibert was chairman, had prepared the public mind for some considerable reduction; for, in the report of the 4th June 1797, they declared, "they were not ignorant, that the scarcity of specie, the high rate of interest, the stagnation of commerce and manufactures, the *high price of labour*, and the want of horses, had rendered the collecting direct contributions more difficult for the present, if not for several years to come."

Of this report Gibert was afterwards accused as of a crime; but on this point, at least, his persecutors were obliged, like him, to confess the truth; for, six days previous to the 18th Fructidor, Fabre, who suffered no opportunity to escape of accusing Gibert's party of maliciously refusing the necessary taxes, agreed with him, that "the taxable produce had *sensibly* diminished by the excessive rise in the price of labour, and the devastations of the war."

All these presentiments have been fully justified, whether by the enormity of the deficit, of which I shall give the amount hereafter, or by the report of La Brousse, a deputy from the Gironde, on the state of that department, which is as fertile as the Landes are barren; and which, however, has not been ravaged either by civil war or foreign hostilities. He asserted on the 31st December 1797, and without being contradicted by any one, that "more than 40,000 executions (*contraintes*) had been *decreed*; and that the unfortunate farmers daily beheld their goods and stock carried away to the market-place, where,

for want of purchasers, they were sold for a mere trifle, and without being at all productive to the public treasury."

If we take this as a ground of calculation for the number of executions *decreed* in the other departments, we must conclude, that near four millions of persons are in arrears, against whom similar rigours are exercised; but this conclusion would evidently be exaggerated, because La Brousse spoke of a country of vineyards, where the crops have suffered considerably during the two last years. Yet to whatever number the *executions* are reduced, it is certain, they oblige the treasury to keep in their employ an army of agents to prosecute the insolvent cultivator, and to *drag his effects to sale*. These agents are called *garnisons*, or *garnisers*; they quarter at discretion upon the person in arrear, who is obliged to furnish them with lodging and subsistence, and pay them twenty sous per day. Thus do they live at his expense, till he is absolutely unable to pay their stipend, or furnish them with subsistence; and this becomes a sufficient authority for their taking away the furniture of the cottage, and leaving it entirely empty.

These *garnisers*, or *garnisons*, have given three great blows to the agriculture of France: 1. By the increase of those expenses which are a total loss to the farmers, and the anxiety to which they expose them. 2. By the fall in the price of articles which they are obliged to sell at any price, to escape from this swarm of extortioners; for, as Lauffat has very justly observed, "whether the market is favourable or not, whether the interest demanded for money be legal or not,

money must be procured \*; otherwise, a *garniser* comes to divide the peasant's loaf of bread; and rob his family of their money and their bed." 3. By the vast number of these very men who have quitted the farming life to make war on those who devote themselves to it. It is unnecessary to add, that they have also adopted a mode of life more favourable than any other to the indulgence of idleness and vice.

The exactions now practised by this fiscal army must surely be very cruel in their effects; since they forced the following lamentations from Takhien himself on the 6th March 1798: "It is time to open our eyes to the enormous surcharges suffered by the landholders, and especially to the *monstrous establishment of the garnisers*, that *impolitic* as well as *immoral* system, which the extremity of the evil perhaps rendered *necessary*, but which contributes to augment the evil itself; that system which becomes a cause of the *immorality* of a great body of citizens, called *garnisers*, and encourages idleness and licentiousness; that system from which may result the neglect of every duty, of every feeling of humanity in its agents, of whose conduct complaints resound from every part, because every part is infested with their idleness, their uselessness, and their vices; that system, in short, which, by augmenting the farmer's debt, renders him daily less able to discharge it."

This truly *monstrous institution* of *garnisers* existed under the old government. They were, however,

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\* Rousseau has said, that it is sometimes the enmity of the tax that keeps an article at a low price. The application of this truth will be hereafter apparent.

rarely sent but to the districts in arrears, and the seizures were not made till after considerable delays. It was not till towards the year 1796 that the founders of the republic perfected the fiscal science, by letting loose these officers, like birds of prey, on every farmer who should plead his inability to pay the land-tax, not merely at the term prescribed, but in *advance* \*. It is also since that period, that the most enlightened deputies have been incessantly representing their increasing misery and the rapid decay of agriculture. They had enumerated the incontrovertible

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\* While the author was publishing this work in London, the Committee of Finance at Paris, on the 28th January 1799, were making their report by their chairman, Males, wherein this subject is placed in a very striking point of view. He began by stating, that the land will, in the present year, be called upon to pay about 300 millions for the land-tax only; and he adds, "This tax costs ten millions in salaries to the collectors, besides the fixed salaries and poundage paid to the ninety-eight receivers and their agents; and which is almost incalculable, *the enormous amount of the executions, seizures, and sales of furniture, enforced by the garnisers and all the innumerable and unperceived vexations that usually attend them.*"

The towns have not escaped better than the country; for, to accelerate the receipts of the poll-tax, the sumptuary, and the mobiliary, or chattel tax, the Treasury has set on foot, for Paris alone, a legion of 200 garnisers, at half a crown per day when unemployed, which, for that very reason, very rarely happens. Who can read without grief and indignation the last report of the Deputy Laporte on this subject on the 10th September 1798? "It is in vain that at Paris 200 garnisers are maintained, in ruinous activity, at three livres per day, besides twelve messengers of executions, and four bailiffs, with their followers. Too often their intervention ends in the ruin of the persons taxed, or in merely paying the salaries of this army of bloodsuckers, without producing any advantage to the public treasury. An exorbitant assessment of from 6000 to 10,000 livres has often introduced the bailiff and his attendants into a house, where he has found only an old crazy truckle-bed in lieu of the rich furniture and brilliant luxury which reigned there in the year v. More intimately acquainted than any of my colleagues with the assessed in the department of the Seine, owing to my long-continued connexions with them, it is for me frankly and honestly to declare their *distress* and their *resources.*"

proofs of these facts in some of the first reports here cited; when M. de Calonne took up the pen in London, towards the middle of the year 1797, to refute them, declaring that it is *certain*, that the cultivators, who before were too poor, have now *enriched* themselves, and that agriculture has *advanced*.

I cannot believe that writer has suffered himself to be deceived by the pompous orders for the *festival of agriculture* then celebrating in France \*. I am

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\* The following is the first order on this subject:—"Considering that agriculture is the first of the arts, that it is the first and inexhaustible source of public prosperity and national riches, &c. orders: "Art. 1<sup>st</sup>. The husbandmen shall mingle with the armed citizens, and, at a signal to be given, shall instantaneously exchange their implements of agriculture for muskets."

With this Chinese mimicry they amused the country people, at the very time when they were raising an army of *garnisers* against them. The order does not state what post of honour the latter are to occupy at this festival; but on recommending to the administrations of the departments to celebrate it this year, the minister of the interior reminded them, that on the 10th Messidor the *beneficent* implements of husbandry are to be *covered with flowers, and held up to public veneration*. He invited them, among other things, to eulogize by name, before the assembly of the people, those districts where the *greatest taste* is displayed in the forms of houses, and the *greatest neatness* within them, &c.

It is not very intelligible, why this is the only festival where the President of the Directory does not officiate in person, nor under what pretext he disdains to imitate the Emperor of China, in himself holding the *golden plough*, which, at Paris, cuts a furrow round the altar of Liberty and Patriotism. The Directory have always left this office for the administrators of the department of the Seine, and the general of the Parisian guard, who have this year given it at once a Chinese, a Phrygian, and a Gaulish character. The *Moniteur* of the 2d July 1798, No. 284, says, "The orisamb of *liberty* waved over a sheaf of corn; that a temple of verdure was raised to *Cybele* in the middle of the grand opening in the Elysian Fields; that the car of *Bacchus* was drawn by six oxen, whose horns and hoofs were *gilded*; that the car decorated with fruits and vine-branches ADDED TO THE ILLUSION; and that this show presented to the imagination those ancient festivals which the fertile Phrygia celebrated in honour of the goddesses of harvests at the foot of Mount Ida."

rather inclined to believe, that he was induced to hazard this assertion by a confused recollection of

But unfortunately this *oriflamb*, this *wheat/sheaf*, this *temple of Cybele*, this *car of Bacchus*, and the *six oxen with gilded hoofs*, however fascinating they might be, did not inflame the imagination of the Parisians. This appears from a work of a German doctor, named Meyer, who was affected even to tears at so classical an exhibition : though he highly panegyriizes the Directory for the ingenious idea of thus reviving the Phrygian festival, he is no less afflicted at the stupid insensibility with which it is attended by the people-king ; he felt a great depression at seeing so few *well-dressed* spectators : he even complains of not having met so great a crowd at this festival as at the others, and of having heard it said in certain companies, that they *recur too often to go even to the window to look at them*.

This indifference of the French seems so rooted, that the project of making them a people truly antique will, perhaps, at last be abandoned as a hopeless enterprise. Their leaders have, however, lately hazarded a new attempt, by displaying before them the monuments of ancient Greece, which have been brought from Rome to Paris ; and by seizing this happy occasion to induce them to make a kind of agricultural institute, the great principles of which they have presented to them under the form of *inscriptions*. Of this the following are examples :

*Where laurels grow the arts shall bless the land.*

*All-bounteous Ceres on our trophies smiles.*

*To Ceres still be honour paid by man,*

*Since from the plough the patriot first began.*

The country people, to whom they endeavoured to afford a repetition of all these civic shows, received them with still more indifference than those of the capital ; and this degeneracy of the public spirit, which caused such deep regret to the good German writer, has at length excited the indignation of one of the new deputies, who, on the 7th July, mounted the tribune, and thus expressed himself : " It is highly important to stop the retrogradation of the public spirit. And you, my colleagues, who like me have lately arrived from the departments, assist my feeble voice, and declare what you have observed. Is it not a fact, that the civic ceremonies have been deserted, while the *festivals of paganism* are celebrated with an ostentatious pomp ? The public opinion, which has been corrupted, must be corrected. Brilliant even to glory abroad, we bear the germ of our destruction in our bosoms. Let us create public spirit, and the severity of the laws will be no longer necessary ; above all, let us have no *puerile timidity* ; let us no longer compound with those prejudices which have almost stifled the republic in its very infancy."

what had been said of the opulence of the farmers during the first years of the revolution. And, in fact,

Let it not be supposed, that the temple of Cybele, or the car of Bacchus, were the *festivals of paganism* this deputy meant to denounce. No; he alluded to the obstinacy with which the country people devote Sunday to divine worship. Misfortune always renders men religious, and as that is their only refuge in adversity, it is not surprising that the innumerable victims of the revolution crowd more and more to the churches, jointly to implore, at the foot of the altar, that God who can reward virtue in distress, and punish triumphant vice.

Such is the last consolation which the tyrants of that nation are now endeavouring to wrest from the people; for, ten days after this deputy had exhorted them *no longer to compound with prejudice*, one of his associates declared, that the surest means of breaking the habit of believers keeping Sunday, were to shut up the churches, and to permit them to be opened only on the *décadi*.—"This you have the power to do," said he; "and thus it is that *I argue*. The republic does not pay any religion. Now to say it does not *pay*, is the same as to say it does not *protect* any in a particular manner. But you do protect one religion in a particular manner, since you have *granted* the use of churches. Having *granted* churches for divine worship, you may *regulate* their use, and say to those who are thus permitted to frequent them, *You shall be admitted only on such a day*. I formally demand, that the public exercise of any worship whatever be permitted only on *décadi*."

This demand has hitherto been taken *ad referendum*: nor must we be surprised that Christians should experience this treatment from the sect of *hommes sans Dieu*, or atheists, who persist in asserting, that the *artillery of reason* is alone sufficient to destroy the great and fatal error of believing the existence of a Supreme Being. Perhaps they have represented to the leaders of their sect, that preaching atheism will procure them more proselytes than violent decrees; and that the dragooning practised by Lewis XIV. was so much the more fatal to the cause, as it drove the Protestants into the forests of the Cévennes, where they worshipped God with more fervour than before.

At length the minister of the interior has yielded to this advice, especially since his commissaries in the provinces are daily writing, that the processions are celebrating with *ostentatious pomp*; and that the bulk of the people are growing more and more attached to the idea of a Supreme Being. In consequence, François de Neufchateau has recently ordered them to change their tone, and has addressed them a circular letter, wherein he points out the means of taking advantage of this revival of religion to reconcile the Christians to the regicide government, and to show them that the

it is very true, that after paying their rent and taxes in paper, which at first cost them but little, and afterwards scarcely any thing, a great number of that class began to experience a degree of ease in their circumstances till then unknown. This delusive and transient affluence deceived Rœderer so much, that he asserted, two years since, that *agriculture had never been so likely to flourish*.—"Let our minds be at rest," he wrote, "on this point; the manufactories are languishing; the manufactories want capitals, but agriculture has never had so much at its disposal. The ruin of the landholder has, in fact, become an immense BOUNTY to the farmer. By means of this the earth has, for more than four years, been *enriched* with more capital than any nation, or any power, has been able, at any time, to devote to agriculture. Besides the buried capitals which peace will again bring to light, it will cause still more to flow in from foreign countries. *Never were so many repairs necessary to preservation, nor was there so much profit to be made by producing.*" The following passage of the same writer will explain the meaning of this sentence: "There is no proprietor of a house but has doors, windows, roofs, and walls, to be repaired after an interval of three years, during which his income being insufficient to procure him necessaries, *forbad*

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revolution is the work of the infinite Essence that governs the world. He expressly charges his commissaries to "represent Providence himself overturning the towers of the Bastille, and then bringing back the fugitive tyrant from the frontiers to the scaffold, to expiate his innumerable crimes." He adds, "*the text of my letter may easily be developed.*"—Abominable association of cowardice, hypocrisy, and blasphemy!



him to attend to the repair of his buildings, and condemned him to suffer them to *perish*, or to *perish himself* with hunger and with cold."

It is true, this writer insisted that the decay of property, and the *ruin* of the proprietors, had in fact operated as an *immense bounty* to the farmers. But besides that this robbery by the farmers, which he has decorated with the name of *bounty*, has added much less to their riches than it has deducted from their morality, Roederer forgot that the nation speedily re- demanded this *bounty*; and that the farmers paid for it very dearly by the double scourge of the maximum and of requisitions. Boissy d'Anglas has, in a single sentence, described the persecutions to which these enriched farmers were exposed. *It was the class, said he, that gave us food, that the reign of terror chiefly oppressed.* In the *Moniteur* of the 29th August 1797, are a series of facts till then unknown, and which show the means employed to pillage the yeomanry who were in easy circumstances, by accusing them of *aristocracy*, and by *raising an outcry against engrossers*. "And who were these *aristocrats* of the country that were thus persecuted?" said Harmand: "they were the supporters of the state, the peaceful farmers who enjoyed a small competence! Such were the men whom subordinate tyrants placed between pillage and destruction.—*Your purse or your life*, resounded from all the revolutionary echoes dispersed over the whole surface of the republic, and particularly in the departments of the Upper and Lower Rhine." The same deputy produced a letter from a person named Schneider to the commissaries of the revolutionary army at Strasbourg, con-

taining express orders to levy loans of ten thousand livres on every rich countryman.

Let us not forget, that those rich countrymen who in the other provinces succeeded in saving the fruits of the robberies they practised on their landlords, made use of the plunder to purchase property which the nation had also procured by robbery. Now, as the Directory has incessantly complained that these purchasers are every where *marked out for the poniard*, as it is very certain that a great number of them have been massacred, especially in the south of France, and as Savary assures us, that their survivors are *disturbed by the most cruel anxiety*, we may be allowed to doubt whether their *bounty* has been really productive to agriculture, and whether, if these usurpers had the means, they would have the inclination, or the imprudence, to risk improvements on property of so precarious a tenure.

I know that Saint-Aubin has insisted, that the sale, or rather the division, of these confiscated lands, has produced the immense advantage of *augmenting the number of landholding farmers*. And this is the grand argument of those who proclaim the regeneration of agriculture in France. At this part of the subject I have long been anxious to arrive.

The celebrated Mr. Arthur Young has, without doubt, considered this subject with more comparative knowledge than any other writer. If we contemplate the picture he has drawn of France, we shall perceive that the circumstance which, in his opinion, most arrested the progress of agriculture in that country, was precisely the too great number of small

*landholding farmers*; and whoever is well acquainted with their national character, will easily guess the reason. No sooner had a farmer, or a tradesman, acquired a small property, than he purchased a little estate, from the same vanity which induced merchants to renounce commerce, and purchase the place of secretary to the king, as soon as they had amassed a fortune of 100,000 crowns. We shall presently perceive the consequences.

If there is any maxim of which the truth has been made apparent by the flourishing condition of the agriculture of England, and by those of their writers who have acquired a reputation in this science, it is this—that the manufacture of the fruits of the earth, like all other operations, requires to be performed in the great, to be productive of real success\*; that is, to obtain a more considerable quantity of produce with an equal share of labour and attention.

But to cultivate land in the great, it is necessary those who undertake it should have a sufficient capital to *stock* it, particularly with cattle; and to this object the farmer should apply all the money he can com-

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\* Switzerland may, perhaps, be cited as an example of a country where agriculture has flourished, though land is there divided into very small portions. But this is an exception to the general rule, because the valleys of the Alps not sufficing for the consumption of the inhabitants, they are obliged to supply the deficiency by *horticulture*; and to gardening nothing is so favourable as the subdivision of landed property. Besides, in every pasturing country the inhabitants are obliged to provide themselves with some other occupation for the winter season. Hence, in Switzerland, every cottager carries on a little manufactory of spinning or weaving. Lastly, the democratic constitution of most of the thirteen cantons, naturally led to this division of property, while the extreme lightness of the taxes made the principal inconveniences of that division totally disappear.

mand. But how can this be done, if the vanity of purchasing land absorb the greater part of his funds, and if he be desirous to be at once a landlord and a farmer?

This is sufficient to prove, that in a country like France, where the price of land was about thirty years purchase, the most advantageous distribution of the various capitals would be that which should induce the rich to lay out their money in land, although it should produce but three *per cent.* and to let it to farmers who will employ their whole property in agriculture, where they may gain eight, ten, twelve, and even fifteen *per cent.*

This distribution, as is easily perceived, has the great advantage of correcting the inequality of fortunes and capitals by that of their relative produce. Another no less important benefit, is the facility it procures of dividing farms in the manner most adapted to render them truly productive, that is, so as constantly to employ as well the labour of the family established upon it, as the cattle and implements appropriated to husbandry. Every farm which is not large enough continually to employ the team necessary for a plough or a waggon, evidently subjects the farmer to unprofitable expenses, which are still more ruinous to him if he is too poor to bear the smallest loss. Such are the considerations that have led some English writers to deem a farm of 100 acres too small; and many of them point out those of 250 or 300 acres as the most favourable to the full development of industry, the economy of time, and the multiplication of produce. I ought to state, that on

this point different opinions prevail as to the extent, according to the fertility of the ground and other local circumstances. But no maxim is more generally adopted in England, than that the smallest farms ought to be large enough completely to employ a plough; which implies, that they must at least contain 100 or 120 acres. Such, however, is the opinion of all enlightened men, both those versed in theoretical and those who are employed in practical agriculture. The latter would consider any farmer as a madman, who, having a fortune of 1000*l.* sterling, should lay it out in purchasing an estate of about fifty acres, and of which the rent were only 30*l.* or 35*l.* Every farmer who possesses some capital, if he has but common sense, endeavours to make it produce ten or twelve *per cent.* by agriculture. Even if he could but gain half as much, he perceives the advantage of that mode of employing his money, and contents himself with being a farmer, to the great benefit of the land-owners, who thus find tenants for their estates who can advance the expenses necessary for their cultivation.

In France the contrary was the case. Mr. Young assures us, that one third of the lands were occupied and cultivated by a class of proprietors who were impoverished by the purchase of land, and who neither possessed enough of it to employ all the industry of their family, nor enough money to improve their estate, however limited its extent. The same writer adds, that this class of straitened proprietors being one of the most numerous, the greater part of these estates, though already too small, were conti-

nually diminishing by division among heirs; and at length offered but a precarious subsistence to a race of men who were the more miserable, because generally too idle or too proud to bestow their labour upon the property of another.

It is said, that the present governors of France are procuring a translation to be made of the works of this author. Most assuredly, had they read them with attention, they would have derived more benefit from the valuable advice he has given France to regenerate her agriculture, by putting a stop, cost what it may, to this increasing evil of the subdivision of small estates. At every mile he travelled in France he found some additional motive for deploring its effects, to which he is constantly recurring in his work; and the only advice he gives to the governors of that empire is, not to enact any law for the protection of agriculture, except one that may put a stop to this infinite subdivision. We may even view this useful advice as the summary of all his observations\*.

Let us now see how these admirers of his works have benefited by his instructions. They began by seizing one third of the lands of France, and these were not the estates laid out in small farms, but those

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\* "In all the modes of occupying lands, the great evils are the smallness of farms. A most miserable population has been created by them, which ought to have had no existence. Small properties much divided prove the greatest source of misery that can be conceived; and this has operated to such a degree and extent in France, that a LAW undoubtedly ought to be passed to render all divisions below a certain number of arpents ILLEGAL." Travels during the Years 1787, 1788, and 1789.

of the clergy and the rich, which were in general divided into large farms. They proceeded by selling these in small lots, whether in the hope of procuring a better price, of attaching to themselves a greater number of accomplices, or of multiplying the number of *landholding farmers*, whom Saint-Aubin now describes as a new germ of animation for the agriculture of the republic. But this is not all; for it has been seen, that at the very time when they were proceeding with activity to the execution of this agrarian law, they endeavoured to perpetuate its effects as much as in them lay, by accompanying it with another enforcing the subdivisions of these small estates almost equally among all the children: so that even were it possible their great national robbery should be established, it is extremely probable, that after two generations an estate of 100 acres, which the purchaser formerly cultivated as a *farmer*, may be divided between five or six of his descendants, who will be condemned to vegetate as *land-owners* in a space of twenty acres, where their grandfather had flourished by uniting these five subdivisions, and paying rent as a *farmer*.

I do not deny, that although this is prejudicial to agriculture, it may, to a certain point, be favourable to population; yet it was of the very generation to which it will give birth, that the Constituent Assembly have acknowledged, that "an excessive population, unless possessed of great industry and abundant production, is a devouring burden to a state, because they must participate the profits of those

who would otherwise have found an easy subsistence, and because the same quantity of work must then be divided between a greater number of hands \*."

It is true, many impartial travellers still repeat the same language that Roederer formerly employed, and declare, that the agriculture of republican France appears to them in a flourishing state. But when it is attempted to extort from them the facts on which they found their opinion, they support it, 1. By this very multiplication of small landholding farmers. 2. By the higher wages and better living of the labouring peasantry. 3. By the great abundance of articles of first necessity which has prevailed during the last two years, so that their price has considerably fallen, although the expenses of cultivation have increased. 4. By the conversion of many parks, waste lands, and avenues of trees, into tillage, and the cultivation of every strip of land that bordered the great roads, and was hitherto considered as forming a part of them.

I much suspect, that, were we to analyse each of these pretended symptoms of rural prosperity, we should find them but so many proofs of its decline. One of them perhaps may, in some points of view, deserve to be excepted; I mean that very increase of wages which is so much deplored in both the Councils. It is difficult to form a just idea of this rise, because no sooner do their orators attempt to appreciate its magnitude, than their imaginations instantly bear them away in a whirlwind of exaggeration. Dupont,

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\* Report of the Committee of Mendicity.



who in December 1795 declared, " that to estimate the general increase of the expenses of cultivation at a *fifth*, is rather below than over the truth," has supported this estimate by additional calculations on the 4th April 1797; but Porte asserted the year after, that *the scarcity of hands has doubled the present price of wages in every SPECIES OF LABOUR*. These two calculators were nearly at an equal distance from the truth, though on opposite sides, and each of them has alike distorted it: for it is by no means a fact, that in farming the wages of *every kind of labour* have doubled. If I am rightly informed, this is only true in the haymaking season, in harvest-time, and during the vintage. The wages of men who are hired by the year as labourers have only increased one half, or in the proportion of three to two; and that of maid-servants only as five to four. If we attend to these facts, which I have received from an impartial eye-witness; if we consider the bad state of the roads, the increase in the price of draught cattle, and the still greater rise in all the implements of agriculture, we shall perceive, that the expenses of cultivation must have augmented, not by a *fifth*, as Dupont has said, but by a *third*, or at least a *fourth*. To this must be added a circumstance from the same deputy's report, namely, that *the revolutionary manners have introduced among labourers a habit of consuming a greater quantity of provisions*.

Different classes of men view this important rise in wages in very different lights; and as most of the landholders exclaim loudly against it, one of the best writers of the day has endeavoured to quiet them by

the following observation : " If both annual wages and daily labour are higher than under the old government, this is no *evil* ; it is a *benefit*. In America the price of wages is *enormous* ; yet this does not prevent farmers from making a rapid fortune."—Such is the language of Professor Saint-Aubin, a writer whom I shall frequently quote, because he has more real information, and commits much fewer errors, than all the present legislators of France. I consider, however, this last observation as such ; not that I contest the principle in itself, but because I draw from it a directly opposite inference.

Certain it is, that in America agriculture flourishes *notwithstanding* the *enormous* price of wages : but it is equally true that this arises merely from the low price of land. There every farming-man is anxious to render himself independent by cultivating his own estate ; and as he can procure uncultivated land in the back settlements at a very trifling expense, all those who have any capital, however small, prefer the prospect this affords to the certainty of greater present gains as the servants of others. Every one knows that to this circumstance Dr. Adam Smith attributes the high price of labour in America ; nor can it be doubted that in France the low price of the confiscated estates, and their sale in small lots, has had a great share in the rise of wages so much complained of. But if this increase of price is a proof of agricultural prosperity in countries where it is caused by the low price of uncultivated lands, for clearing which new adventurers are daily offering, it follows, that in countries where the same effect arises from a confi-

derable and rapid fall in the value of lands already cultivated, we ought, in lieu of deeming it a *benefit*, to consider it as an *evil*, and as an alarming symptom of the present and future decline of the country where it exists.

A much more lamentable cause presents itself to account for this rise of wages, which the farmers in every part of France allege as an excuse for not paying either their rent or taxes : that it arises principally from the depopulation of the country, and the consequent scarcity of hands. Of this the last papers from Paris furnish additional proofs, for they declare that it is in the Vendée that wages of farming servants are most increased, having there augmented in the proportion of nine to five. The letter in which this fact is related, charges the *avidity* of the labourers as the cause\* ; of which the true meaning is, that the confusion of ranks has placed the proprietors of landed estates at the mercy of those who have none, and that the latter avail themselves of this to form a *league* which the government is unable to repress under the system of *equality and the rights of man*.

The rise of wages would not be a sufficient motive of alarm, did it not arise from the three causes here pointed out, or had it proceeded by degrees, or were it possible it might continue : that is, if the price of

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\* This letter is as follows : " The situation of the farmers in the Vendée is very deplorable—the *avidity* of servants who demand four fifths more annual wages than were given before the war, adds to the difficulties and the straitened condition of the *métayers*. If we compare the prices of goods, and examine the limited market which commerce affords, we shall easily perceive that the condition of the farmers could not be worse." (*Ami des Loix*, 3d Fructidor, 20th August 1798.)

produce had experienced a proportionate rise, as in America; or if, as in England and Scotland, agriculture had been so improved as to produce more abundant crops \*.

\* For some years past the price of labour has increased in England by one sixth, and in most counties by one fifth; to which must be added a similar augmentation in the poor's rates, which should always be considered as a part of the wages stopped by the farmer from his labourers, to be restored to them when they come to want. However, as the farmer, on the one hand, has gained more notwithstanding the rise of wages, and on the other the landlord, at the expiration of his lease, has generally been able to raise his rent, the condition of the labourer has been improved; and thus every thing has harmonized together.

But what still more clearly proves the advancement of agriculture in Great Britain is, that notwithstanding its population has increased for a century past, notwithstanding the riches or revenue of the consumer have in general been trebled, that the price of labour has at least doubled, and that the rent of farms has generally augmented in the proportion of five to two, the price of wheat is nearly the same as a century ago, although the use of rye and oaten bread has given place throughout the greatest part of the country to that made of wheat. It may be added, that in the same interval the price of butcher's meat has more than doubled, which at the same time proves the increasing opulence of the consumers in the towns, and explains, by the consequent additional manure, how the price of wheat has continued the same, although that of rent and labour has so much increased.

Though this has principally arisen from the improvement of agriculture, yet three other causes peculiar to Great Britain, and which have only begun to exist within the present century, have co-operated. The first of these is the excellence of the great roads, where the land is as strictly economized as it was extravagantly lavished in France. On this none but useful luxury has been bestowed, and the repairs are so much the less expensive as they are attended to with unremitting vigilance. The second is, the great number of canals, forming a communication from sea to sea, and between most of the navigable rivers, by which the conveyance of produce is facilitated. The third is a still more modern establishment, which must by no means be passed over in silence, when treating of the improvement of agriculture, since it has contributed in innumerable ways to its advancement; I mean the *country banks*, whose paper has diminished the interest of money, and given its circulation both more facility and greater activity.

Such is the outline of the steps pursued by the English to aid the energies of Nature; and it must be allowed that among European

In fact, a case may evidently exist where the price of labour may augment, while that of the article produced may experience no considerable rise, and this without diminishing the farmer's profits. The case I am here supposing is one of the most infallible symptoms of the improvement of agriculture. It proves that with an equal, and perhaps with a smaller portion of labour, more produce has been obtained from an equal surface of land. Such a state of affairs is a proof of a real improvement in the art, since that can only be accomplished by the advancement of all its component parts, as for example, by additional en-

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nations, the English are one of those who owe most to her beneficence, and on whom she has most freely lavished her favours; not only by giving them a profusion of the most precious minerals, namely, the best coal that has yet been known, salt-springs, and rock-salt in an abundance inferior only to the mines of Galicia; but above all, in bestowing on them the most temperate climate, and that *cloudy atmosphere*, in opposition to which the French are always so loudly boasting their *vivifying sun*. It is however to this "*dull and rainy*" climate that the English nation are indebted for the following advantages: 1st, The facility of turning out their cattle throughout the year, which is practicable even in the north of Scotland. 2d, An almost perfect assurance of escaping the extremes of cold in winter, or burning droughts in summer. 3d, An almost equal confidence of not suffering by hail or violent storms, which periodically destroy a considerable portion of the crops of France: 4th, That habitual moisture so favourable to pastures, and to the multiplication of cattle, without an abundance of which, arable land is never very productive. 5th, Almost infallible rains in the months of July and August, enabling them to plough their land immediately after the harvest, in order to sow turnips, wherewith to fatten their sheep on these very lands, while at the same time those animals manure the soil, which by this mode of cultivation produces three crops in two years. To all these we may add, rivers that rarely overflow, and which, if we except the Trent, generally commit much fewer devastations than those of any other country. Nor ought we to omit the invaluable advantage of a coasting navigation, which facilitates the communication from the centre to the extremities of the empire. Such is a short sketch of what the British nation owe to the bounty of Nature.

closures to prevent the useless straggling of the flocks; by crossing, or rather changing, the breed; by varying the feeds and manures with intelligence, so that the land may neither be exhausted, nor unnecessarily lie fallow; by increasing the quantity of artificial meadow land; by forming new water-courses to render the natural meadows fertile; and above all, by opening canals, which are an inexhaustible source of economy for the conveyance of manure and produce. But are things so in France? Where are the canals she has cut? Where are those so ostentatiously promised to the inhabitants of the country? The war and the revolution have devoured every thing; they have even swallowed up the necessary funds for keeping in repair the old canals, which had cost such immense sums under the former government. *Soon will the inquiring traveller be told, These febrile marshes were once the canal of Orleans.—Here lie the remains of the canal of Loing.—There you may contemplate the magnificent ruins of the stupendous Canal du Midi.* Thus said Dupont on the 5th January 1797. No doubt we must not implicitly believe all the poetic fictions of this legislator and economist; but it is difficult not to infer, that these superb water-communications have suffered great dilapidations\*; nor can I disco-

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\* Independently of the decay of these canals, many sluices, which served the irrigatory canals for watering land, have been suffered to go entirely to ruin. But what is still more disastrous, is the entire neglect of repairing the dykes, which prevented the overflowing of rivers, and the inundations of the sea. Those of Dol have lately given way, and so great an extent of land is under water, that “10,000 families are wandering about that department without any place of refuge, without relief, and without any means of subsistence.” When that calamity was announced in these terms in the sitting of the 2d Octo-

ver any incongruity in the assertion delivered the same day by that deputy, when he exclaimed—"It is necessary that canals should traverse France in every direction, conveying life and circulation throughout the whole, as the veins and arteries throughout the human body." To prevent the old canals from falling into total ruin, that deputy proposed to sell them to individuals, and insisted that this source of revenue *disappears when placed in the hands of government and its commissioners*. It is very true that in England similar works are always performed by individuals at their own risk, and for their own advantage; and it is remarkable, that more of these undertakings have been carried into execution during the present war than at any former period. But Dupont forgot that these speculations require large capitals, and he had just ac-

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ber, Blin complained of the *delays* that had prevailed during the last eight years, in works of the *most urgent necessity*, and declared, that "the repair of the dykes of Dol had long been considered as *indispensable*; that this event had justified the fears that had been entertained; and that *the disaster was such as to fill every man with horror*."

Dutch Flanders is evidently menaced with a similar calamity, now, that country is in the hands of the French; for a few days previous to the misfortune at Dol, the Deputy Miger had declared, "that the dykes which protect the department of the Scheldt are in a most alarming and ruinous state."—On this a message was immediately sent to the Directory, who have as yet only answered, by announcing in their turn, that it is of *the most urgent necessity* to raise new funds for the war. It is worthy of remark, that for this purpose they have not as yet pointed out any other means than that of immediately selling the national forests, and that the Councils have considered these as so important to the preservation of the public dykes, that they have declared them *inalienable*. This new decree would, however, speedily be repealed, were it possible any purchasers should offer\*.

\* The catastrophe of the inundation of Holland at Nimeguen, Breda, &c. has but too speedily justified the fears expressed by the author. T.

knowledged that France had long dissipated those she might have applied to similar objects.

What has been just said on the state of the roads and canals, and on the increase of wages, is so much the more alarming to the agriculture of France, as, by a contrariety unexampled perhaps in history, at the same time that the expenses of cultivation have augmented by a *third*, the price of corn has diminished by a *fourth* below its average rate\*; and, which

\* Every account agrees in proving that wheat has fallen to three fourths of its average price, which was twenty-four livres the septier (of five bushels), and which now fluctuates between sixteen and twenty. In the sitting of the 26th August 1798, the Deputy Arnould said, "The net revenue of the land of France, taken on an average before the revolution, was estimated in money at 1100 millions. This was at a period when the price of wheat had been constantly, during twenty years (from 1769 to 1789), at twenty-four livres per septier of 240 pounds weight. At present, in consequence of several abundant harvests, of the want of circulation, and of the prohibition to export, wheat is only eighteen livres the septier in a very great majority of the departments, whose chief riches consist of corn."

The price of butcher's meat, or rather that of cattle, has generally fallen in the same proportion, at least with regard to sheep and small cattle; for those used in agriculture and for draught have rather risen in value.

It is by no means the same with regard to wines, of which the price has risen during the last three years, although their qualities are said to be considerably worse. Yet ever hurried away by that national inclination which leads them to attribute every effect to a single cause, and especially to that which it is intended to do away, the most enlightened writers of Paris, and the warmest friends to order, at first accounted for this temporary rise in wines by the brutal manners introduced by the revolution, and by the clubs and primary assemblies, which have rendered large meetings more frequent. Thus did Saint-Aubin at that time attribute it to the "*sudden increase of the consumption of wine by workmen, who on the sudden re-appearance of specie were much better paid than during the reign of assignats.*" But I suspect that this increase contributed to it much less than the seasons, which during the years 1796 and 1797 were as unfavourable to the vintage as they were advantageous to corn. It is true, that Saint-Aubin has mentioned this fact, but he has forgotten two other causes, which must have produced an equal effect, and on which so able an observer ought not to have been silent. The one is,



seems scarcely possible, this very fall is adduced by travellers as a proof that agriculture flourishes in that country. But before we admit this argument, it ought

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that during the last four or five years the cultivation of the vine has been much more neglected than any other branch of agriculture, because it requires more hands and larger capitals : the other, that the labour necessary to produce a barrel of wine of the value of twenty-four livres, is at least double of that required for a measure of wheat of the same price. Hence it results, that if the latter was formerly produced with only the expense of six livres for labour, and if the price of this labour is augmented in the proportion of three to two, the measure of corn must be sold at twenty-seven livres, while the price of the labour represented by the barrel of wine having increased by six in lieu of three livres, the latter ought (all other things remaining equal) to be paid one fourth more, or thirty livres.

This increase of price would perhaps be rather a benefit than an evil to France, if wines and brandies were not the only produce of her soil, of which she has a real surplus, or by which she can procure whatever articles she wants ; but if, in consequence of a durable rise in the price of labour, her wines should become permanently dearer by a fourth or a fifth, the competition of those of Spain and Portugal would be much strengthened, and France would suffer a considerable diminution in the only branch of her former produce that remains, whereby in some degree to pay for a part of her importations. Nor are all these investigations relative to the increase in the price of wines during the three last years, any longer applicable to the present price, especially of those of superior quality, which are destined for exportation, since the reporter Coufard declared, on the 3d September 1798, " That in the departments where the wines are made which are consumed by foreign nations, the cultivators have even considered it as a *calamity* to have an abundant vintage. What means then can remain to pay the taxes when the farmer has not the requisite funds to cultivate the earth ? " Nor is this an exaggeration ; for Saint-Aubin, who was the first to declaim against the too great consumption of wines, and to complain of their high prices, has now resumed his pen to lament their depreciation : " Of all the departments," says he, " those which are at once maritime, and wine countries, are the most in arrears for the land-tax : and the principal cause of this delay is, the *fall in the price of wine*, which is in a great measure occasioned by the want of exportation."

As to fire-wood, the price in those markets where there is no water-carriage depends on the distance and state of the roads, and on the more or less oppressive terms granted by government to the contractors, to whom they sell the privilege of cutting wood in the national forests. In general, the price of wood, even of that which is not cut, has already considerably increased.

at least to be proved, that the low price of corn arose from its abundance, which indeed might not be impossible, considering the fertility of the two last years; for although, in general, France does not produce a quantity of provisions equal to her consumption, yet seasons of abundance have often happened when she had an overplus of corn, which the king then allowed to be exported. But as the Directory persist in refusing the permission requested by some departments of a free exportation of corn, saying, that its abundance is *on the point of being as fatal to them as its scarcity had been before*; yet we have a right to conclude that the directorial commissaries, dispersed through the various departments of France, do not believe in this superabundance of corn, with which, if it existed, it would be so important to France to pay for a part of those importations which continually exhaust the little specie that remains. If, therefore, the low value of the produce does not arise from its abundance, it must be attributed to the poverty of the consumers in the towns. We have already said that this is one of the greatest calamities that can threaten the agriculture of any country; and every one knows, that, together with this, the want of roads and markets is the cause that paralyzes that of Hungary, of which the soil is still more fertile than France.

It is true, however, that during the two last years France has supplied itself with food; and this fact alone seems to prove an increase in the quantity of produce. But besides that this may be accounted for by the possession of Belgium and the left bank of the

Rhine, we must not forget that the old territory of France has now much fewer mouths to feed. Hence, without disputing that labouring men may consume a trifle more meat and wine since they have been better paid, the extraordinary diminution which has taken place in the population of the towns, accounts for a fact which is erroneously represented as a regular increase in the abundance of the harvests.

But there is another cause which explains it, and in a manner still more ominous to the people of France: I mean the total subversion of the established modes of pursuing and conducting agriculture, which, in common with every thing else, they have attempted to *revolutionize*. It is well known that after the scarcity in 1794 and 1795, which in some parts had quadrupled the price of wheat, the farmers (whether from avidity for gain, from the fear of a famine, or to escape the law of the *maximum*, and save their grain from a compulsory barter against assignats, of little or no value, by sowing it) devoted themselves with inconsiderate ardour to the cultivation of corn. At that time they cultivated every waste piece of land, drained ponds, ploughed up commons and meadows, converted parks and avenues into tillage, grubbed up coppices, and even destroyed nurseries, and the poorest peasantry planted potatoes on the edges of the highways. These plantations are represented as proofs of unparalleled rural prosperity: yet they were only *unparalleled* because the old government kept a severer watch to prevent these encroachments.

Although the greater part of these speculations were

performed without manure, it would not have been surprising had they produced a much greater temporary abundance of corn. Yet before we consider the triumph as complete, we should examine whether it ought not to be attributed to an abandonment of the true principles of agriculture, and whether it would not have been more profitable to the farmer to have bestowed his attention on the confiscated lands, which are, in some places, overgrown with weeds, than to neglect those and clear new ground? in a word, whether the people of France have not cultivated their lands precisely as their leaders have administered the public finances, by a system of *exhaustion* and *anticipation*. I wish I may be deceived; but all these boastings, concerning the activity of the present cultivation of France, appear to me to resemble those of a farmer who should praise himself for having taken advantage of the expiration of his lease to double his crops, by not suffering the land to lie fallow, by breaking up the meadows, and by destroying the nursery and coppices.

The cultivators of France have already perceived their error, and are lamenting its consequences. It is said, they are already preparing to diminish the proportion of arable land, and that the quantity ploughed and sown last autumn is much smaller than was so employed in 1797: a diminution which may also assist us in accounting for the present abundance of grain, and is itself to be attributed to the fall in the price of corn. This, it is but justice to acknowledge, the Deputy Golzart had foretold on the 17th February 1797: "The cultivation of land," said he,

“ will be *soon abandoned*, because it will cease to support the labourer.”

And how could this be otherwise, when the expenses of cultivation had gradually augmented by one third, not only without a corresponding rise in the price of corn, but with this price decreasing in proportion to the increase of expenses ? This double change will appear much more ruinous to the cultivators if we reflect on the very bad state of the roads, which adds considerably to the expense of carriage, and causes an accumulation of grain in those parts where water-conveyance cannot be had ; for land-carriage is become so troublesome and so expensive, that, if we may believe Saint-Aubin, “ many articles would be twenty-five *per cent.* cheaper if the roads were better, or were the water-conveyances and waggons under better regulations.”

To form a just idea of the present aggregate net income of the landholders, formerly supposed to be 1100 millions, we must recollect that since the revolution the expenses of cultivation have increased by at least one fourth, and that the price of corn has diminished in the same proportion. By combining these two facts together, we shall be possessed of an arithmetical proof, that even were the raw produce as abundant as it was formerly (which, admitting it to be the case, could only be attributed to the uncommon favourableness of the seasons), the net revenue of the proprietor of corn-lands must be diminished by at least one half. The calculation is simple and easy. Let us suppose an estate to have produced, before the revolution, 400 septiers of corn, which were sold for

400 louis d'ors, and that of these 200 were clear profit. If, on the one hand, the expenses of cultivation, which then amounted to 200 louis, are now increased to 250, and, on the other, the crops are sold for only 300, the proprietor's income will be reduced from 200 louis to 50, or will be less by three fourths than before. Hence if this land-owner was formerly taxed at one fifth of his income, or forty louis, the same tax would now amount to four times that proportion, or four fifths of his income. This is the grievance of which the farmers of the department of *Landes* complain, and this example will prove, that such complaints may be founded, though no additional extortion may have taken place.

If however, in appreciating the diminution of the net agricultural revenue of France, we should take these two examples as our only data, we might overrate this decrease, not only because the department of *Landes* is the only one that has hitherto complained of an overcharge of four fifths, but because the prices of other productions of the earth have not fallen in the same proportion as that of corn, and also because a great proportion of land-owners, farmers, and métayers cultivating their small estates with the labour of their family, and without the expense of wages, their incomes may not have suffered much by a rise of wages which they are rarely obliged to pay. All these circumstances considered, I think we shall not materially err in stating the diminution of the net agricultural income of France, including that of the landholders, farmers, métayers, and vintagers, at *one half*.

This is nearly the estimate lately presented to the Council of Elders by the Deputy Arnould, on whom we may rely with the greater confidence, as he is more conversant with these subjects than any of his colleagues \*. On the 20th June 1798 he declared, there was reason to expect a diminution of 450 millions in the territorial income, which he stated to have formerly amounted to 1100 millions. And he asked the Council how the landholders or tenants can, with the remaining 650 millions, pay the land-tax of the year VII. or the arrears of the two preceding, which amounted together to 500 millions ?

It is doubtful, from the manner in which Arnould stated this question, whether he meant to include the newly-incorporated provinces. But if we add 100 or 150 millions to the remaining half of the agricultural income of old France, the aggregate income of the landholders, farmers, and métayers of the present republic, with all its aggrandizements, will only amount to 700 millions. Such are the *taxable means* on which the Directory hope to raise, during the current year, more than 500 millions† in *direct* contributions, besides the *indirect* taxes, the greater part of which this class of men are obliged to bear. Scarcely would it be possible to collect one half of all these

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\* He is the author of a work entitled *Balance du Commerce*, and various other publications on political economy, much esteemed in France.

† Arnould is mistaken in computing them at only 500 millions. If to the direct tax are added the arrears claimed, the expense of collecting, and the additional *sous*, the total exceeds 600 millions, as will be found in Chap. IX. of this work.

taxes, even were the farmers robbed of the seed intended for their future crops.

In vain have extraordinary efforts been made to impose universal silence on the oppressed: notwithstanding the menaces of terror, the cries of misery will be heard. They have even found their way into the official papers, which are filled with petitions from the various departments, complaining, like that of the Meuse, that a population is assigned them far beyond the truth, and most of them suing, like those of l'Eure and l'Aveyron, to be relieved from half their land-tax. On these the legislative body have almost always passed to the order of the day, pretending to have sufficiently diminished the burden of the land-tax, by transferring a seventh part of it to the conquered provinces: and Dupont himself has endeavoured to represent this relief as "the recompence of the sacrifices made by the people to accomplish those conquests." This deputy estimated the former agricultural income of the Low Countries, together with that of Savoy, and the counties of Nice and Avignon, at 154 millions, a sum which must appear very small to those who believed the positive assertion of his colleague Julien Souhait, who, on the 24th October 1796, positively declared, "that a contribution of one fifth of the net revenue laid on Belgium would produce *one hundred* millions."

Were it worth while to refute these extravagant assertions, it would be easy to prove that the aggregate agricultural income of the inhabitants of all the additional departments, including those on the Rhine,



has never exceeded, nor even amounted to, 200 millions in the time of their greatest prosperity; and that their sovereign did not levy taxes exceeding one fifth of that sum. But it is sufficient to observe, that the conquered provinces have participated in the principal disasters that have attended agriculture in France, and that they have also been the theatre of war. Belgium, which is alone more productive than all the rest of the incorporated departments, and which contributed to its sovereign only about twenty millions of livres, has been so much oppressed by its deliverers, that they inform us themselves, “ that immediately after their conquest, ferocious proconsuls levied to the amount of eighty-two millions, and that the *requisitions* were extended *even to varnishes and laces.*” Yet although the loss of above 10,000 horses, and an immense quantity of horned cattle, is still severely felt by that country, its agriculture will much more speedily recover the shock than that of France: 1st, Because much less of the landed property there has been confiscated and divided: 2d, Because the ruinous tenure of the *metayers* is unknown there, and the farms are pretty large: 3d, Because the science of agriculture was in a very high state of improvement in that country, which, together with the great fertility of its soil, and its numerous canals, affords the inhabitants of Brabant and of Austrian Flanders, as well as those of French Flanders, great resources against the effects of the revolutionary storm: 4th, Because, having large capitals, they were thereby enabled to support greater losses before they sank under their misfor-

tunes : 5th, and lastly, Because they have escaped the most ruinous of all taxes, that of the *assignats*\*.

The rich forests, however, of the Low Countries suffered equally with those of France ; for since the end of the year 1796 the French have boasted of having already *cut down there one million five hundred thousand trees*. The destruction of these forests obliges us to consider those of France as among the ruined remains of her agriculture ; for even previous to these ravages, every well-informed man in France agreed, that no time ought to be lost in correcting the abuses of the administration of the forests, and planting new ones. And without recurring to the destruction that has taken place among the trees within the last eight years, it is to be remarked, that while, on the one hand, they have been so industriously rooted up, on the other hand none have been planted ; no one choosing to risk precarious advances on so volcanic a soil. This is a fact which cannot be doubted, after the report of the committee of forests, presented by Bignon on the 7th October 1796 : “ It is evident,”

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\* The legislators of France have endeavoured to reconcile the people to paying the taxes, by incessantly reminding them that they paid no taxes during the reign of the assignats, as if the assignats themselves had not been the most oppressive, though perhaps the least perceptible of taxes. Each additional emission occasioned a fall of one *per cent.* on paper ; and though the government did not actually put their hands in the pockets of the people, yet, in fact, each of these emissions took from them the hundredth part of their paper capitals. One of their present representatives has calculated that by this mode they levied a subsidy on the nation of about five milliards of *real value*, which was thus eventually assessed in the most unequal proportion. But in this loss Belgium had a very small share, because the assignats were not introduced there till their depreciation had become permanent, when, the illusion being at its height, they were passed from hand to hand like a burning coal.

said he, " that many citizens, after having cut down quantities of timber, have broken up the soil for other purposes, while others have *cleared the coppices*; and yet no one attends to replacing them by forming new plantations \*.

What land-owner would be so irrational as to apply to this object, while the present government is alternately sequestrating; confiscating, selling, and resuming the very same estates, and when not one individual can look forward with a confidence that he shall transmit to his descendants the inheritance of his fathers? Nor are these national confiscations and sequestrations the only impediment to sowing and planting land; they are also prevented by the lawless robberies daily committed on private property, which, as Talot asserts, the *gardes champêtres*, or country guards, abandon to the most dreadful devastations, of which they are sometimes accomplices.—" An outcry," said he, on the 1st February 1798, " is now spread all over France against the collusions of these legal guardians, these pusillanimous and immoral officers; and how can rich land-owners venture to plant their orchards

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\* Under the old government no landholder was permitted radically to destroy any woods without binding himself to plant an equal extent of land.

François de Neufchateau, in one of his last letters, declares, that it may require more than a century to repair the robberies that have been committed in the forests.—Another work by Citizen Cadel of Vaux, which is equally in point with the predictions of this minister, asserts, that so great is the diminution of wood in France, that that country is in serious danger of a gradual defalcation of her waters. This writer founds his opinion on the necessity of mountains crowned with forests to the existence of plentiful springs. Whether his hypothesis be founded or not, the fears which gave birth to it may evince the extensiveness of the devastations which have excited his alarms.

or their hedges with mulberries and apple-trees, or repair the plantations on the great roads? In vain would they prepare future woods for their children; for, on the contrary, they are forced to destroy those they now possess. *They are obliged to anticipate the axe of a stranger by employing their own, &c.*"—He concluded this picture of the injuries which individuals sustained, by denouncing them as *the cancer* that was totally *destroying agriculture*.

This orator purposely exaggerated these evils in order to conceal the truth, or at least to throw it into the back ground. The real cause of all this plunder and devastation, the true cancer which *corrodes* the agriculture of France, is the immense confiscation of landed property.

It is almost too evident, too trite an observation to be repeated, that the first spring of emulative industry is the hope, the certainty, of enjoying the fruits of our labour. The farmer depends on the regularity of the seasons for his crops, and on the regularity of the laws of society for the power of disposing of them. But when the latter suspends its protection, or itself becomes the violator of property, discouragement takes place of industry, and paralyzes the hands by which it was nourished. Men continue, it is true, digging the earth to satisfy their physical wants, but they no longer exert themselves to multiply its productions, or venture on sinking money in improvements, and least of all in planting trees, the possession of which is uncertain from day to day. Hence Rousseau says, that property is the *basis* of the social con-

tract ; for *to him who must lose the fruits of his labour, doing nothing is the greatest gain.*

In appreciating the effects of such a discouragement on the present state of agriculture in France, we must reflect that the greater part of the best cultivated lands having been confiscated, have passed from the hands of the rich to men greedy of gain, who, aware of the insecurity of their new possessions, immediately converted every thing into money, or, as Cambon declares, caused them to be adjudged to them for the sake of *selling the trees and materials, and afterwards abandoning them in their ruined state.* The various modes of deterioration to which the estates called national have been and are still exposed, ought to be the subject of a separate treatise. Should any one undertake and execute such a work with competent skill, it will appear that the majority of the purchasers who have escaped the poniard, and who persist in retaining their ill-gotten property, endeavour to exhaust the soil, as if their lease were about to expire on the first *convulsion.* In that work the cause of property might be placed in the most striking point of view, and the apologue of the *master's eye* confirmed. It would then be evident that the hand of a lawful and secure proprietor alone can give life and activity to agriculture, while that of an usurper exhausts and consumes every thing it approaches. It would then appear that the hand of the latter is that of the harpy, and his touch that of the deadly asp.

The confiscations have been equally injurious to agriculture, by reducing the price of land so much,

that even those which have not been confiscated, and which are very carefully distinguished by the name of *patrimonial* lands, can no longer be sold for more than ten years purchase of their present, and consequently five years purchase of their former income \*. It may perhaps be said, this is merely an imaginary evil, since the land still exists. This, however, is a gross error. So great a depreciation produces the most lamentable effects on agriculture. Ten years ago it was easy to borrow a sum equal to ten years income on mortgage at five *per cent.* interest ; whereas now that sum would purchase the estate : nor can the proprietor procure the most trifling loan without such exorbitant interest as renders all improvement impracticable. " Those who are desirous of engaging in speculations of profitable labour in agriculture, are now deprived of the loans which the pledge they have to offer would formerly have procured them." Thus did Duprat express himself in the sitting of the 23d March 1798, and we have the less reason to doubt this fact, as, shortly after, one of the eleven questions proposed in the public prints to patriotic writers was as follows :

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\* In the sitting of the 20th July 1798, Lecouteulx, whose accuracy we have no reason to suspect, acknowledged, " that this kind of property *scarcely sells for ten years purchase of the real income of the seller.*" Yet he was speaking only of such landed property as had not been confiscated.

At the period when Lecouteulx stated this fact at the tribune, the anonymous banker before mentioned couched one of his questions in the following terms : " *Why is the price of land so low when compared with that of land in neighbouring countries ?*" —The answer was as follows : " Those who formerly were rich *cannot*, and those who are lately become rich *dare not* purchase large estates : and besides, the interest of money is so high, that the very worst mode of employing it is to lay it out in the purchase of land."

*Why cannot land-owners find money at any price?—*

Among the various answers which the Directory permitted to be printed, the following seems conclusive: *Men will not lend on pledges of which they would not become purchasers, nor will they advance their specie with the risk of being repaid in paper.*

It is this impossibility of borrowing money on land at any price that led Arnould to say, that “the destruction of the colony-trade, the bad state of the roads, the difficulty of communication, the abundance of corn, and its low price in far the greater number of departments, will not for a long time permit landholders to hope that their incomes will supply the means of *improving* their estates.”

This indeed is a very moderate conclusion; for if the only doubt were, how long the *improvement* of their estates would be deferred, or merely their cultivation remain stationary for a considerable time, the evil would be trifling. They are deprived not only of the hopes of future *improvement* by their present impoverishment, but frequently of the means of getting in their harvest; and if we may believe the above-cited anonymous author, they are placed *like Tantalus* amidst unproductive plenty. “The monied man,” says he, “amuses them with promises till he reduces them to the necessity of selling, for a *trifling consideration*, the produce of a year’s industry. The power of monied men arises out of the wants of the state; and,” he added, “will only end with them.”

In that case the end of their reign is still very remote. But as this is the assertion of an anonymous writer, and as, notwithstanding the acuteness with which he

has resolved many of the problems proposed, he has passed over this symptom of decay \* with that levity so characteristic of his nation, it is requisite to confirm it by the more official authority of a passage in one of the last reports of the Deputy Lecouteulx, wherein he speaks to the following effect: "Intermediate speculators buy up the crops, and hold them till purchasers offer. Those who are engaged in this *intermediate speculation*" (which is called *intervention secourable*), "have no object but to derive from the little money they can dispose of, an exorbitant interest, unknown till the present times."

This important confession proves how far the rate of interest affects agriculture, and that, if the retail prices of bread and meat are not reduced in proportion to those of corn and cattle, the price of corn is much more reduced as far as regards the sums received by those farmers who are at a distance from the markets, or are obliged to apply to the intermediate speculator, whether to get in their crops, or convert them into money.

Such have hitherto been the effects arising to this class of citizens, by whom society is fed, from assignats, and from the national robbery of which that class have become accomplices! What an instructive lesson for the Italians and the Swiss, to whom France still ventures to talk of *confiscations* and *sequestrations*,

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\* "However serious may be the disorder," says he, "it is not wholly desperate. France is so *robust*, she repairs her losses with so much ease, her physicians are so *assiduous*, she conforms to the remedies prescribed with so much *docility*, that a cure will soon follow from a mild regimen and persevering attention; but let us beware of empirics and their violent nostrums."



as an inexhaustible source of riches ! It will be happy for them if they grow wise by the dear-bought experience of those who have given the example \* ; and if they perceive the consequences of this destructive system before it is too late. No sooner is it adopted, than the uncertainty of retaining the patrimony of their ancestors, or transmitting it to their descendants,

\* What can be more true, or better expressed, than the following declaration of Lecouteux ?—" Can it be expected, that our finances will be improved by *confiscations*, or our fields better cultivated when under the yoke of *sequestration* ? The prosperity of the public finances, the abundance of the supplies, the facility of collecting the taxes, the ease and rapidity of the public receipts, and all the advantages of a free circulation, depend entirely on the citizens enjoying their property in peace and security under the protection of constitutional laws, and devoting themselves with confidence to their respective labours and undertakings. The security of persons and of property always produces *abundance*. In such circumstances the buildings on farms are always better kept up, the land better cultivated, and the fields more stocked with cattle. Such are the effects which constitute the happiness of the people, and the true riches of the state. But, on the contrary, when the citizens live in constant fear under a legislature, who strike at whole masses of property, and are successively exposed to *confiscations* and *sequestrations*, specie disappears, the *lands remain uncultivated*, repairs are wholly neglected, creditors remain unpaid, the taxes are exhausted, and the public treasury *drags itself along* by the aid of an odious *usury*, or amid the *convulsions of continual bankruptcy*."

It is remarkable, that the deputy from whom this confession is extorted by the present decline of his country, is the same person who prepared his colleagues for the idea of a *national bankruptcy*, by speaking of it as of a trifling *family affair*, and sanctioned the *forced loan*, by assuring them that it was a mere *insensible perspiration* of the body politic.

It is a shocking fact, that while they are thus proclaiming their tardy lamentations, these legislators of the mother republic coldly suffer the new republics, whom they have taken under their protection, to be afflicted with all the calamities they are deploring at home. Even the revolutionists of Helvetia have already, under the direction of a French commissary, opened a register for the pretended Swiss *emigrants*, whose estates are put under *sequestration*. With a few months further instructions from the Great Nation, we shall see the lands of her four allies *destitute of cultivation*, and their Directors *dragging themselves along*, like their oxen, amid the *convulsions of continual bankruptcy*.

precludes the landholders from all plans of improvement: hence this class becomes generally disgusted, and then a starving government may more easily extend its rapacious hands over their property; the price of land continually falls, because every one endeavours to part with it, to save some of the wreck of his fortune; the interest of money necessarily rises in proportion; usury exceeds all control, and its pernicious influence extends to every species of industry, and to the arts which are the most essential to agriculture. In proportion as capitals become more scarce, manufactories are shut up, and ploughs and other implements of husbandry grow dearer, while the impoverishment of the consumer causes a fall in the price of produce. Thus the wound increases from day to day with the utmost rapidity, and if its depth is not at first perceived, this arises from agriculture being able long to subsist upon its old stock. It appears, however, too soon, that it is rapidly declining, and that a rapacious government has, in a short time, dissipated by violence what economy had been accumulating during a long series of years. In short, the evil would be irremediable, if necessity, which obliges men to plough the earth for the means of subsistence, did not, to a certain degree, counterwork this activity of tyranny, or if some hope of deliverance from its oppressions did not cheer the hearts of its unhappy victims.

Can it be conceived, then, after this melancholy picture of French agriculture, and of the misery of that oppressed class of men who are employed in its labours, confirmed by such innumerable documents

faithfully extracted from official reports, that a contemporary writer should have hazarded an assertion, "*that it is certain the cultivators are enriched, and that agriculture has advanced?*"

To this bold assertion that writer will permit me to reply, that I have read with the closest attention all the debates of the representatives of the French nation; and that notwithstanding the innumerable bravadoes in which they periodically indulge, concerning the increasing power of the republic, no one has dared to assert at the tribune of the Councils, that agriculture has *advanced*. On the contrary, they have all united, latterly, in acknowledging, that it has sunk into a state of *languor* \*; and that the land-tax has robbed even the small farmer of *absolute necessities* †. The only exception to this is the assertion of Golzart, that *agriculture had never been in a more flourishing condition*. And it must be noticed, not only that it is two years since he made that assertion, but that, like Rœderer, he took great pains to attribute this prosperity to the facility of paying taxes by means of assignats. It was this deputy too, who, while thus forcibly declaiming against the exorbitancy of the land-tax, foretold, that *the cultivation of land would soon be abandoned, because it would not even furnish the labourer with a subsistence*.

All his successors acknowledge, that this last part of his prediction is on the eve of being fulfilled; and Julien Souhait, one of the most atrocious of the Ja-

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\* Crassous, on the 23d March 1798.

† Berthot, on the 26th August 1798.

cobins, has himself declared, that *the fields of France are tilled with the sweat of misfortune* \*.

The only public man who has lately hazarded a different language is François de Neufchateau, who, as minister of the interior, has recently addressed a missive or circular letter to his agents; wherein he says (4th August 1798), that “ *the revolution has procured agriculture every possible advantage* †.”

We have already taken a review of what it has done

\* One of the most distinguished of the revolutionary writers, B. Constant, who has incessantly recommended to his countrymen perseverance in the sacrifices they suffer, has also resumed his pen at the commencement of the year 1798, to declare to their leaders, “ that the strength of that nation has its limits, as well as that *proneness to hope* which has hitherto sustained them; that they have been constantly *disappointed*, although they have never ceased to renew their sacrifices; and that, worn out by the brevity of every thing that has existed, they can scarcely believe that which now exists to be permanent.”

Such is the picture drawn by B. Constant in his last revolutionary oration, wherein, however, he assured his hearers, that *the cause of these evils no longer exists, and that the bottom of the sea is calm*. This academic harangue was, however, only the key to another, wherein he had established, that the revolution was calculated to produce the liberty of all, by *leaving the property of each individual INVIOABLE*.

† This very man, however, when he arrived at Seltz to join in the conferences for peace, agreed with the municipality of that place, that he *saw around him many ruins*. This very man, too, when representing to the farmers how much the revolution had done for them, complains and wonders, that “ they pay to foreign nations an *alarming* tribute for the purchase of *wool, hemp*, and many other articles, of which they ought to have a surplus to dispose of.” He has lately, in like manner, reproached them with their baneful *fallows*, and the numerous *marshes* and *heaths* still remaining in that extensive country. *The republic*, he adds, in his paternal style, *has many conquests yet to make at home*. Nor will these be the least brilliant of her exploits.

It is to be remarked, that at the very time when this hypocrite was endeavouring to concentrate the attention of the people on the *conquests to be made at home*, his colleagues were sending out two fleets and two armies for the conquest of Egypt and Ireland; the equipment of which had occasioned all those cruel seizures and distresses exercised by the *garnisers* on the miserable inhabitants of France.

for those who have devoted themselves to this species of industry; but the better to appreciate the gratitude they owe to the faction which seized the reins of this revolution on the 18th Fructidor, we must take notice of two decrees, which form an epocha in the annals of fiscal tyranny and oppression.

The first of these is the decree of the 9th Vendémiaire (30th September 1797), in which, under pretext of avoiding all arrears for the year vi. which had just commenced, it was enacted, that three fourths of the land-tax should be paid in advance within the *three first months*; or, in other words, it exacted from the farmer the superfluity of his crops, at the time when he was committing the seed which was to produce them to the earth. This was indeed more than fulfilling the French proverb; for it was eating the corn even *before* it was in blade. But this is not all; for it required these advances of those who were *taxed highest*; of those who, it had been acknowledged, were taxed not only above two thirds, but even four fifths of their income \*. Such is the class

\* Of this decree, the fourth and fifth articles are as follows:—  
“ In order to accelerate the epocha when the daily receipts and expenditure shall balance, a sum of *one hundred millions* shall be paid by anticipation on the direct contributions of the year vi.

“ One half of the persons taxed, viz. those who are *taxed highest* in each commune, shall be *obliged to pay* before the 1st Nivose (21st December 1797) *half* the amount of their land-tax, and the rest of the persons taxed, one *fourth*. The remainder shall be paid by equal instalments in the course of the nine following months.”

This decree had been proposed by a member of the Council of Elders, who, on the 7th of the preceding July, said, “ it would be an act of *barbarity* to the farmers to suffer the tax to accumulate in their hands; for all of them,” said he, “ are either *indigent* or *improvident*.” He thought it much more humane, it seems, to extort from these *indigent* men the produce of two harvests in one year!

of men who were ordered to pay in, before the 21st December 1797, one half of what the republic appropriated to itself out of the crops they hoped to reap in the autumn of 1798; and which, in all probability, they will not be able to sell till the spring of 1799. It is true, that as no man can be obliged to do what is impossible, notwithstanding this decree, and all the achievements of the *garnisers*, these *advances* have remained so much in arrears, that in the middle of the eleventh month of the year vi. the minister of finances addressed a thundering letter to the administrations of the departments, reproaching them bitterly, "that at a time when at least two thirds of the land-tax of the year vi. ought to have been paid in, 191,769,182 livres still remained DUE \*." Such is, and always must be, the result of taxes that cannot be paid. This law has only procured the Directory thirteen or fourteen millions in eleven months: it has also given them a legal title to send forth their *garnisers* against every one who is in arrear, and who dares openly to speak against them. Hence it is evident, that these officers are become a most powerful lever in their hands, and that these men form a new political order in the French republic.

The second decree alluded to, is that for a *military conscription*, ordering a new levy of 200,000 youths. In the debates on this law it was not even attempted to be concealed, that it would bear principally on those farmers who had, during four years, been in-

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\* This letter was dated the 4th of August.

indulged by special favour with keeping at home *their only sons, notoriously known to be working at the plough.* Will it be believed, that only two deputies dared to raise some scruples as to the expediency of this measure?—"No doubt," said the first, "soldiers are necessary to the existence of the republic; *but, at the same time, we must not sacrifice every other class of men.*"—"Remember," said the second, "to what a state of misery the execution of the law passed in 1793 reduced a vast number of farmers who had only one son, and who, by the loss of that son, remained destitute of helpmates, and even of the means of subsistence." Here he was interrupted by murmurs, and Savary silenced him by saying, "'The proposal of the last speaker tends to subvert the very foundation of the law which is the subject of deliberation. What he insists on amounts to the rejection of the law itself.'" The former speaker, however, dared not persist, and the law was sanctioned; but he had said enough to show, that its *fundamental principle* was to take away by force from the peasantry their *only sons*, whom they had till then been permitted to retain, and whose forced departure will leave their parents *destitute of helpmates and of subsistence.* Such was the language held in the debates of the two Councils at the very time when the minister of the interior was reminding the inhabitants of the country that *the revolution had procured agriculture every possible advantage* \*.

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\* The minister of war, when instructing his commissaries and agents rigorously to enforce the new requisition, took care to represent it as that which would decide the *success of the negotiations for peace*, and expressed his concern "at being forced by circumstances

The list of the evils it has caused to the peasantry of France would not, however, be complete, were we to omit mentioning the quack doctors and conjurers, the ignorant and venal judges who have been substituted for the parliaments, and the pretended lawyers who combine with these new judges to devour the substance of the people, by perpetuating the innumerable lawsuits that have arisen from the revolution.

It is certain, that since the country people have been deprived of their priests, who were either massacred or transported, they have substituted in their place astrologers and fortune-tellers, who induce them to believe in witchcraft. Of this the administration of Bapaume officially complained to the legislative body, and declared, that *these astrologers introduce discord and misfortune into private families* \*.

Hitherto we have only spoken of the ravages committed in the armies by the pretended officers of health; where, as Vitet asserts, they *seem to conspire with the cruellest enemies of the republic for the destruction of republican soldiers*. But we must not imagine that the military hospitals were the only scenes of *assassination* which that reporter meant to denounce; he also complained, that these empirics began to *ravage both the towns and country places*; and his colleague Baraillon asserted, that when they returned into France, "they

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to put an end to the *protections (le provisoire)* granted to men useful in agriculture and the arts." Was it then but *provisory* that a promise was made to the young men who should marry, that they should be exempt from enlisting for the army?

\* See the *Moniteur* of the 15th December 1796.



*mutilated* children in the cradle, *under pretext* that some operation was necessary to the preservation of their lives."

Another less murderous, though, in most country places, a no less baneful evil, arises from those new republican judges whom the Directory reproach with *venality and intrigue*. These judges demand enormous fees, and their ignorance is still more prejudicial than their venality, by continually rendering it necessary to *recommence* proceedings which their incapacity has rendered null and void \*.

But what still further protracts lawsuits is the swarm of locusts, who, under the new name of *légistes* and *avoués*, have usurped the places of advocates and attornies. "In fact," said Riou, on the 25th October 1797, "it is *evident*, that the chicanery which seemed to be destroyed by the revolution is revived with more activity, more art, and more rapacity, than ever; that dishonesty, ignorance, and deceit, surround every avenue to the tribunals; and that there being now no stated fees, nor any limits in making charges, these locusts daily lay the citizens under *contribution* with impunity. Formerly the bar was subject to certain

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\* See the speech of Genissieux, in the *Moniteur* of the 29th January 1798, No. 281, wherein he alleged this as an argument for increasing the salaries of the justices of peace, observing, "That it was shameful that less should be allowed them than to a clerk; and that the expense incurred by this increase of their salaries would be balanced by the diminution of costs in the proceedings." \* See also the speech of the Deputy Legier, in the *Moniteur* of the 12th September following, when he reproached the civil judges "with not being familiarly acquainted with the proceedings, and with committing irregularities which often occasioned appeals, and the recommencement of a suit before a new tribunal, where another jury must be summoned and new witnesses called."

regulations, but now the *most unbounded licentiousness* reigns there under the name and pretext of *liberty*."

To form an idea of the enormous amount of the *contributions* under which these locusts lay the country places, we must reflect on the millions of lawsuits still pending to regulate the value in specie of transactions in paper; lawsuits which the legislative body itself renders endless, by continually enacting new explanatory laws always more and more obscure \*. These added to the disorder of the finances, which obliges the revenue to seize the last chattel of the inhabitants of the country, and make them drop the *sweat of misfortune*. These unfortunate people are still contending with the *unbounded licentiousness of that chicanery* which they thought had been quashed. Such is at this day the condition of a nation which flattered itself the *golden age* was returning.

Notwithstanding this too faithful picture, I will not assert that no individual district can be found, at a distance from the theatre of war, where the peasantry and yeomanry may appear rather to have gained than lost by the revolution; either because they were oppressed by such of the feudal rights as were really

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\* In the sitting of the 4th October, Legendre gave his colleagues an idea of the number of these lawsuits, by assuring them, "that every one who enjoyed the rights of a citizen had *at least one suit*, either as plaintiff or as defendant. This," added he, "amounts to from *six to nine millions* of lawsuits, and completely ruins those individuals." These lawsuits throw whole families into distress, and the tribunals are incessantly applying to the legislative body to consult them on some unforeseen case, demanding a new scale and a new law—"Let us close this infernal box," cried Dedelay on the 30th May 1798, when it was again under discussion. It would indeed have been far easier never to have opened the *infernal box* of the assignats than it will be to close it.

tyrannical, or because they persist in not paying either their rent, their taxes, or their ground-rent; for it must be acknowledged, there are some districts where no troops are quartered, and where no *garniser* has yet dared to act. But of what import are a few individual exceptions in the midst of this vast heap of ruins?

Nor do I deny, that by omitting to extend the law of the *maximum* to living cattle, many young beasts escaped the requisitions for the armies, and were saved from slaughter. Nor am I ignorant that, rather than accept the paper which would have been paid for these cattle, a great number of the yeomanry have found it answer better to keep them alive; and that in the interval the small cattle have so multiplied, that only those fit for draught, or for the plough, are dear or scarce. It is equally true, that during three or four years the non-payment, or rather, if you please, the illusory payment of the rent and taxes, had procured the country places a momentary affluence; and that the inhabitants having, as it were, an instinctive presentiment of the fate of these *ideal* mediums, retained more objects of real value than the inhabitants of the towns. It is also true, that many of the latter have taken to husbandry when manufactures were destroyed; that women, and even children, have, in many parts, done the work of men in the business of farming; and that the day-labourers, being better paid and better fed than formerly, have performed their work with more alacrity. It is also true, that the most bloody anarchy cannot render any country wholly steril. But the depopula-

tion of France; the devastations of war; the universal destruction of the studs of horses; the dearth of beasts of burden, as well as of iron and all the utensils of husbandry; the diminution of the quantity of manure; the persecutions suffered by the richer yeomanry; the long decay of all the buildings and manufactories relative to agriculture; the increase of the number of small farming landholders; the bad state of the roads; the enormity of the taxes at present laid on land; the exactions of the *garnisiers* who collect them; the collusions of the *gardes champêtres*; the conflagrations in the departments of the west, where the farmers are still, perhaps, petitioning for the restoration of their *implements of husbandry*; the fall in the value of land; the high rate of interest; the low price of produce; the general impoverishment of the consumers in the towns; the annual renewal of those primary assemblies which periodically agitate the people, and take them from their business; the quartering of soldiers; their insolence in consequence of their victories; the new levies, by means of which even their *only sons* are taken away from the farmers; the scarcity of hands, and of money, for getting in the harvest; the increase of wolves, which commit the greatest ravages in mountainous countries; the great number of plundering *chauffeurs* and of banditti, who scour the plains, and exceed even the wolves in ferocity; and lastly and principally, the confiscation of estates, and the continual insecurity of those who have preserved theirs: all these evils united have inflicted on the agriculture of France the deepest wounds. It will be long, very long, before these

wounds are healed ; nor can they even be palliated, but by restoring property to all its ancient rights ; for that alone can fertilize and enrich an empire.

Yet if this great act of justice were performed by degrees, and without convulsions ; if, at the same time, the landholders were called on to enjoy that political weight and influence which is their due, and without which they cannot have the least security ; if these landholders are yet worthy to have a constitution which may, in some measure, render them bondsmen for each other's property ; if they are relieved of the greater part of the enormous tax which must, sooner or later, render the country unfruitful ; this nation is so well disposed to forget the past, to be heedless with regard to the present, and to indulge hopes for the future, that all these injuries will not excite in them half so much discouragement as the least of their iniquities would have produced in England. Yes, I insist that if property is ever re-established on its proper basis, we need not be surprised to behold them devote themselves with eagerness to agriculture. In that object would the hands that escape the destruction of war, or were formerly employed in manufactories that have been annihilated, be immediately employed. The fineness of their climate would co-operate with their exertions, and being reduced by poverty to limit themselves in their consumption, and to forbear from foreign as well as domestic luxuries, the inhabitants would by degrees regularly supply themselves with all their wants. This, no doubt, must be a work of time ; but with peace abroad, and order at home, that period might

arrive sooner than can be expected. Thus then I do *not* imagine, as Pelet declared four years since, that *the tree of reproduction has been destroyed to the very root*. This hyperbole is allowable in a Frenchman, who beheld the agriculture of his native country surrounded on every side with ruins, and who had incessantly cried aloud for *peace*: but what excuse can be offered for the Directory, who, when soliciting new subsidies for the prolongation of this disastrous war, have dared to assure the inhabitants of France, that *their resources are entire*?

No, I cannot contain myself when I contemplate this unparalleled imposture. And do you dare still to tell your nation, that *the resources of France are entire*? On what objects can you fix your eyes while uttering this gigantic falsehood? On what objects? —Ah! doubtless, on those standards drenched in human gore which wave above your heads in your hall of audience, where your ministers and your warriors come to drink, like you, of the poison of false glory, and call it victory. Oh! turn from those delusive trophies, whose momentary triumphs are obscured by the immensity of the sacrifice they have cost your country: Oh! tear away those splendid veils to the misery and wretchedness in which you have immersed for a long period of years the generation that is groaning under your tyranny and oppression.

## CHAPTER IV.

*The former Prosperity of the French Colonies, and their present Desolation.*

OF all the writers who have treated of the importance of the French West India islands and their produce, M. Necker had the best opportunity of collecting authentic documents. He declares, that the balance of about seventy millions of livres, which the French annually gained by their trade with foreign countries, was entirely attributable to their colonial commodities, and the sale of them abroad to the annual amount of seventy or seventy-five millions \* : from which it appears, that if they had not had such a surplus of sugars, coffees, and indigos, for sale, in lieu of their balance with foreign nations, amount-

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\* The Abbé Raynal, who wrote with most authentic documents before him, and who deserves our confidence in all his statements relative to these commodities, informs us, that in 1775 the islands of the great archipelago of America produced annually as follows : To Spain fifteen millions of livres ; to Denmark eight ; to Holland thirty ; to England eighty-two ; and to France 126 ; so that the West India possessions of the latter were nearly as profitable as those of the four others together. On investigating this account still further, we find, that at that time St. Domingo alone supplied nearly four fifths of these 126 millions, or twelve millions more than all the English islands together. On inspecting the subsequent tables of its produce, we perceive that it had increased by above one third during the eleven following years ; and that, in 1786, it amounted to 131 millions. The Abbé Raynal had therefore sufficient reason to call this island *the finest settlement in the new world* ; and it would not, perhaps, be difficult to prove, that this colony alone was as productive to France as the trade and territorial revenue of the East Indies are to the British empire.

ing to seventy millions in their favour, it would have been four or five millions against them. It would have been seventeen millions against them according to Echaussériaux \*, and even thirty, if we may rely on the registers esteemed the most exact, I mean those of the year 1787.

We may observe, that previous to felling in Europe the sugar they received from the Antilles, the French refined it themselves, and thus enjoyed the treble profit of the planter, the carrier, and the refiner. We may also observe, that the vast number of ships employed in this important navigation formed a nursery of seamen for that kingdom, which procured it the second rank among maritime powers.

Such were the principal advantages which the French derived from their colonies; advantages of which M. Necker conjured them *never to lose sight, that they might not neglect that source of prosperity through ignorance of its true basis and foundations*. It was not without reason that he was thus strenuous to point them out, for the sect of the economists were endeavouring to persuade the nation, that the loss of those colonies would be a gain, and that by renouncing them, and directing their attention exclusively to domestic agriculture, the country would be richer, more populous, and more powerful; and would sell to foreign nations what they now dispose of to their colonies, &c.—

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\* “Deduct,” said he, on the 6th June 1796, “what the colonial commodities added to your trade, and the balance will no longer be in your favour. Your exportations will then be 210 millions against 227; and therefore the loss of your trade with other nations is *evidently* seventeen. It is therefore a *striking truth*, that your colonial commodities alone procured you the superiority in your foreign trade.”



“ Why must I dwell so long,” said M. Necker; “ on assertions so lightly advanced? But what would be the consequence, if, by neglecting these invaluable possessions, or by entirely losing them, France should forfeit the commercial balance in her favour, which she annually acquires by the exportation of her colonial commodities? What would be the consequence were she obliged even to purchase of foreign nations that portion of these very commodities which she wants for her own consumption? *Such a* REVOLUTION would annually draw out of France more money than is now imported into it,” &c.

This *revolution*, however, is arrived; and to calculate its effects, we must ascertain, if possible, what these rich farms cultivated in America by Africans produced to their former possessors in Europe. Although Echassériaux and Vaublanc have valued the total of their shipments to the mother country at 250 millions of livres, this is evidently exaggerated. The former has even indulged in a much greater hyperbole, by advancing that *the French disposed of colonial commodities to the amount of one hundred and seventy millions in their trade with foreign nations*; but he forgot, no doubt, that it was common in France to evade the duties paid on West India produce, by declaring many consignments as *intended for re-exportation*, which were, in fact, consumed in the country.

I think I take a fair medium in estimating at 200 millions the average value of the annual raw produce shipped from all the colonies to France for a few years immediately preceding the revolution. I add, by way of conjecture, that of this, one half was con-

fumed within the country, and the other half re-exported. This extends the sale to thirty-five millions beyond the Abbé Raynal and M. Necker; but we speak here of the years 1786, 1787, 1788, and 1789, in which the *trade of France was most flourishing*.

Such are the terms in which Arnould lately expressed himself \*, and his confession is truly memorable, because the æra of the *most flourishing trade* of which he speaks was precisely that when it was attempted to persuade his countrymen, that they were completely miserable and ill governed; and that to be elevated to the high station to which their powers and their genius gave them a claim, the empire and her colonies must be administered on principles entirely new.

Let us now see what has been the result of the adoption of these new principles; and since St. Domingo alone contributed nearly two thirds † of the magnificent catalogue of the West Indian importations of France, we shall chiefly confine ourselves to that island, which Barbé Marbois has represented as *the most flourishing colony that ever existed*: and he was the more worthy of credit, as he had once been administrator of it. He says, “ that not only its re-

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\* In his *Système Politique et Maritime des Européens*.

† In the report delivered by Perrée on the 24th December 1797 he asserted, “ that in 1787 the produce of St. Domingo amounted to 187 millions, and in 1790 to 195 millions.” But it is evident, he speaks of so much currency, though he has not the candour to say so; for the exportations from St. Domingo, when in its highest splendour, have never exceeded 130 millions of livres Tournois, which are equal to 195 millions currency. These calculations too depend much on the market price of colonial commodities, which have considerably increased since the periods when the Abbé Raynal and M. Necker wrote.

venue was sufficient for all the expenses of its government, but that it furnished a surplus sufficient for opening great roads, building bridges, constructing aqueducts, digging canals, bringing water from great distances into the towns, distributing it by means of public fountains, opposing the sea by commodious quays, building many useful edifices, &c."

Miserable remembrances ! Almost all these fine monuments of French industry have been destroyed either by their own hands or by their slaves, to whom they sent forth liberty like a whirlwind of destruction ! But we will leave to their own legislators the mournful task of writing this history, which is at once so shocking to humanity, and so little known !

On the 29th December 1796 Bourdon said, " The genius of discord has hovered over the island of St. Domingo ever since the revolution. The different tribes of its inhabitants have armed and destroyed each other\*."—The committee, of which he was chairman, had just quoted some of the crimes which accompanied those alternate massacres. They had declared that these *exceeded the powers of imagination*, while at the same time they brought up *papers*, the

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\* That deputy declared that this *general extermination* had reduced the population of the French part of the island to less than 300,000 inhabitants, or about half its former number ; an assertion which no one ever attempted to contradict : but soon after the 18th Fructidor, a deputy named La Vaux certified, " that, including 119,000 inhabitants of the part which formerly belonged to Spain, St. Domingo contains a population of 800,000."—This is double the number that existed at the time of the census in 1779, as quoted by M. Necker, which only amounted to 288,803 in the French part of the island, of whom 250,000 were slaves. It is true, that during the eleven following years the number of the latter had almost doubled in consequence of the importations, which amounted annually to about  
12,000.

reading of which they declared would *make their hair to stand on end*. My pen refuses to blot my page with the horrid tale. They may be found in the *Moniteur* of the 13th November 1796, and we may derive a faint idea of them from the following report by Vaublanc some months after :

“ Yes, the bright luminary that fertilizes the island of St. Domingo, has shone upon such horrid actions as the mind is afraid to dwell on, and hurries over with precipitation. It has beheld a new species of victims in that most interesting part of the human race. It has beheld a tribe of miscreants who have exhibited to mankind a crime which so many philosophers believed impossible, that of man drinking the blood of man, and devouring his flesh.”

Such has been the work of these *friends to the negroes*, these pretended French philanthropists, who preach up the *common happiness* of mankind ! Such have been the fatal consequences within the tropics, of the *declaration of rights*, which came like thunder to break the fetters of the Africans, and suddenly to raise to the extreme of political equality a debased cast, whom it would even have been difficult to prepare, by slow degrees, for personal emancipation. The same Vaublanc, while contemplating the threefold impossibility of either cancelling that fatal charter, of explaining it to them, or of bringing them back to subordination and to labour, exclaimed, “ We have destroyed our colonies by vain, metaphysical disquisitions, and rendered those who cultivated them still more miserable than they were before. *In fact, we no longer possess them*; and humanity, weeping

humanity, rejects with indignation the insensate homage we have offered her. The loss of the colonies exposes us to the necessity of annually paying to the rest of Europe that tribute which we ourselves received before the revolution. *We must necessarily either adopt the manners of the Spartans, or shudder at our present situation.*"

On the 31st May 1797, Admiral Villaret said, "Our trade, our navy, and our finances, are united by every possible tie with the existence and prosperity of our colonies. It is the devastators and executioners of these that have ruined the 50,000 families who are starving for want of work in our principal ports. 'Tis they that have robbed our mariners of those means of instruction which rendered them the rivals and the conquerors of the English sailors. 'Tis they that have exhausted the channels by which life and riches flowed in immense abundance into Nantes, Bourdeaux, Rouen, Havre, and L'Orient, and thence circulated through all the veins of internal communication. Reflect on the innumerable advantages we derived from the colonies : reflect that within the last seventy years they have almost doubled our specie—and can we be surprised at this, when the annual imports and exports of their produce amounted to 160 millions? The mother country annually exported to them commodities to the amount of seventy-eight millions, forty millions of which consisted of manufactures\*. *The island of St. Domingo produced to*

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\* Besides these forty millions in the manufactures of France, the colonies annually took wines and brandies to the amount of six or seven millions, and flour to nearly the same value. The rest of their importations was the produce of the continent of America.

*France more than any four of her finest settlements.*—Should the genius of finance multiply restraints and prohibitions at will, should it levy *indirect* taxes to any amount, and assess the very air that a free nation breathe, how can it fill up so vast a *blank*? or how replace such important resources? Yet never were resources so needful. Do not deceive yourselves. THE THRONE OF LIBERTY IS EXPENSIVE. Let us beware of imagining we may dispense with our colonies. Their produce is absolutely necessary to our finances, and their commodities are become *objects of first necessity*. While we had colonies, it was with the superfluity of our produce and manufactures that we paid for their commodities. But now we pay to the nations of Europe the tribute they formerly brought to us. It is with our gold that we purchase the produce of the English colonies. Thus do we at once impoverish ourselves and enrich our enemies. Prohibitions would be useless, for avarice eludes every barrier. *Have you calculated how many years we shall be able to bear this constant draining of our specie?*"

Nor is it perhaps an unimportant remark, that the

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As Admiral Villaret spoke from the register of the custom-houses in the colonies, and as a great deal of contraband trade was there carried on, we have every reason to believe their importations amounted to above seventy-eight millions. To form a just idea of this we must add, first, the value of the merchandise exported to Africa, as the price of the 20 or 25,000 negroes annually imported into the colonies; and, 2dly, the sums remitted to the islands by the minister of marine, for the expenses of the civil and military establishments. By comparing these three circumstances, we may presume that during the five years that preceded the revolution, the *net income* of the planters, whether inhabiting the islands or residing in Europe, amounted to about *one hundred millions*, after defraying the expenses of cultivation, the maintenance of the negroes, and that of the white agents employed in managing their estates.

economists, observing the calamities suffered by the colonies, took advantage of the opportunity to persuade their countrymen, that *it was a very trifling object to France to recover the sugar islands*. Such is the position which Dupont attempted to support, and it has been already stated, that this was one of the favourite dogmas of his sect. It is true, that to avoid being accused of recurring to this as a consequence of his own particular system, he was very careful to add, that it was inconsistent with their new principles of liberty to cultivate them. But it is still more remarkable, that the majority of the French writers, who had adopted this doctrine at a time when the islands were in their highest splendour and prosperity, rejected it with indignation when they had lost them, and from the time when Dupont proved that *it was no longer in their power to retake them*: and while the wits of Paris endeavoured to silence him by that celebrated verse, which the present war will render more and more worthy to be quoted:

Le trident de Neptune est le sceptre du monde.

*Great Neptune's trident rules the subject world.*

Men of sense replied to his arguments, that without colonies there would be no merchants' ships, and without merchants' ships there would be no marine: and Barbé Marbois incessantly proclaimed, that if France should lose both these, she must renounce all her influence in the affairs of Europe, and *sink into a power of the second order*.

Thus did that nation begin to open their eyes to the importance of their colonies after they were lost:

thus was the picture of their destruction gradually unfolded in that senate, which had some time before issued the decree that lighted up the conflagration of destruction in the edifice of colonial prosperity. What still more horrid details should we not have had to transcribe, if the principal reports on the colonial affairs had not been read in *secret committees*? Hence the particulars here related could only be collected from the debates which almost immediately preceded the 18th Fructidor; but no sooner was that contest decided, than the victorious party seemed to be alarmed at the publicity of these debates; and whether to quiet their colleagues, or to affect to be themselves free from uneasiness, Borgnes, who was one of the devastators of St. Domingo, assured them that this publicity would give England a most powerful blow. *She trembled, said he, with fear from the day when she learned that you were about to tear away the veil which concealed from your eyes the true state of the colonies.*

He evidently alluded to that menace so frequently repeated at Paris, that *the emancipation of the negroes being a proclamation of liberty to all the slaves in the Antilles*, the subversion of all the English settlements would produce a full compensation to France. As yet, however, most of them have but the more rapidly advanced in the career of prosperity. The wisdom of the British parliament, in lieu of at once constituting their negroes a political and civil order of men, has deemed it wiser to meliorate the condition of their slaves, by gradually introducing impediments to new importations, and thus accelerating the æra, when without ruining the planters, who have



brought the islands into their present flourishing state, they may for ever prohibit this odious traffic in human flesh. Were there any Englishman anxious to precipitate this desirable event of the emancipation of the slaves, let him reflect on the following confession of Creuzé Latouche, one of the wildest of the adventurers, to whom the French nation have delegated the right of trying new legislative experiments—"If you would desire a conclusive example of the necessity of choosing proper opportunities for our measures, you will find it in the calamitous and bloody history of one of the most important of our colonies. It cannot be denied, that the injustice of their former state was shocking and unpardonable, both with regard to the laws, and the men who lived under them : but a proposition too abruptly adopted, although incontestably founded in the most sacred principles of justice, has produced the most dreadful consequences. It must ever be lamented, that on the discussion of this important question, crimes and folly *borrowed* the arguments of the keenest *sensibility*, and leaving probity and wisdom to bear the odium of opposition, publicly assumed the praise of the most heroic disinterestedness and the most intrepid virtue. We have since felt what humanity has suffered from this zeal, which, whether *sincere* or *false*, was certainly *blind*, and *fatal*, not only to the interests of mankind at large, but even to its own."

Thus did this Jacobin\* speak even within a week

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\* He had been anticipated by Vaublanc, who drew a picture of the dreadful consequences of the emancipation of the negroes : for his first care on taking his seat in the legislative body, was to inform

of the victory of the 18th Fructidor, in which he took so distinguished a part, and till then no deputy of that party had ventured to support the Directory. Yet at that juncture they had the effrontery to write to the two Councils, that in all their orders to their agents in the colonies, *they had preserved their adherence to PRINCIPLE, and a great RESPECT for property.* The same party, however, defended these agents

them that the slaves were every where abandoning agriculture: "Their cry," said he, "is, that the *soil belongs to them, and that they will no longer permit a single white man to exist there.* While they swear the most ferocious hatred against the whites, that is, against the true Frenchmen, they are waging a cruel war among themselves. Alternately tyrants and the victims of tyranny, they outrage the first feelings of human nature, and renouncing the softest affections of the heart, *sell their own children to the English.*"

This discovery, that the negroes, when they became French citizens, *sold their own children*, was the answer by which this orator resolved the question he had set out by asking—*Are the negroes happier than before?*

But Vaublanc himself had been also anticipated by General Rochambeau, who, as soon as he arrived in St. Domingo, wrote in the following terms to the minister of the marine: "I do not hesitate to *foretel*, that after having given liberty to the blacks, and put arms in their hands, *we shall be obliged to make war on them to bring them back to agriculture.* There is no liberty in this island but for African commanders and creoles, who *dispose* of the rest of the species like *beasts of burden.*"

The five men who at this day govern France, well know that this is the natural disposition of all those who suddenly arrive at the possession of power, or of slaves who become masters.

Deterius nihil est humili, dum surgit in altum :  
Cuncta ferit dum cuncta timet, desævit in omnes,  
Ut se posse credant. Nec bellua tetrior ulla  
Quam servi rabies, in libera terga furentis.

CLAUD. in *Mor. Ruf.*

The above dispatch was the cause of General Rochambeau's being recalled and disgraced. He was succeeded by African generals, whom the minister Truguet congratulated on *their success.* The Saturnalia of St. Domingo still continue, as well as those of Paris, which they even exceed in horror and barbarity.

after the 18th Fructidor, and seemed entirely to credit the official dispatch of one of them named Raimond, who wrote from St. Domingo to the ministers, that—"if they would obtain 30,000 mules from the Spanish government in that island, with the *happy disposition then prevailing*, that colony would, *in less than six years, become more flourishing than ever.*"

It was the more important that this should be believed, as the Directory had formed a resolution to subject the colonies to the same taxes as the mother country, and as their partisans proposed to establish a land-tax there: an idea which till then had not been adopted by any one, not even by the economists themselves.

This novel idea was strenuously supported by the Deputy Borgnes, on whose account Sonthonax, the commissary of the Directory, of whom we shall often have occasion to speak in the following pages, had created the place at St. Domingo of *Superintendent and Controller-general of the Finances*. This same controller-general, in a printed memoir, boasted of being called the *Marat of the Antilles*, and, turning to advantage the fiscal knowledge he had there acquired, fully satisfied his colleagues by saying at his return—"I am just arrived from the colonies. Their present planters will never consider themselves as Frenchmen, as republicans, or as recognised by you as children of the same country, unless they pay taxes. They will not consider liberty as perfectly established till they share the burdens of the state. They retain for themselves a fourth of the raw produce of the plantations they cultivate as farmers of the nation. On

this part of the produce they will pay the tax *with pleasure.*"

Echaffériaux alone had the courage to expose these new impostures, and brave the resentment of the Directory by founding the tocsin of alarm against these extortions. "Oppressed Sicily," said he, "will for ever cry aloud for vengeance against the government of Rome. We do not wish our colonies to offer a similar scandal to mankind, or that the agents of our colonies, free from every restraint, should be tempted to become the imitators of *Verres*, and of all the proconsuls, whose tyranny and rapine have rendered them infamous for ever. During the course of the revolution every thing has been in disorder and confusion, every thing has been arbitrary. The public revenue seems to have been a mine which every one thought he had a right freely to work, and the expenses of the colonies were the tub of the Danaids. It is necessary to recover every branch of the public revenue from the *decay* into which it has fallen, or our colonies will become a *burden* to us. The *transported* inhabitants and the *refugees* form a class of men, concerning whom you must pronounce some decision. The former, removed to the colony in consequence of the dangers which their presence excited, and sometimes by *arbitrary* measures; the latter, forced from their homes by the dread of the events of the revolution of St. Domingo, expect their future destiny from our laws. The colonies cannot be well administered, nor enjoy the least tranquillity, till the legislature has definitively determined with regard to the *emigrants*, the *transported persons*, and the *refugees from beyond sea*.

It was a kind of magic, which in the laws of Lycurgus held one half of the people for several centuries in slavery to the other; and the same injustice has, for an interval of 3000 years, ever *called aloud for vengeance.*"

But the unheard-of cruelties committed under the ferocious administration of Sonthonax at St. Domingo, still call a thousand times more loudly for *vengeance* than the laws of Sparta. This new Verres, not contented with crucifying French citizens\*, or permitting them to be crucified, discovered a no less expeditious mean of plundering *en masse* those planters whom he dared not send to execution, or whom his persecutions had not forced to emigrate. He transported them in large numbers as *suspected persons* to France, and to the United States of America.

Sonthonax at the same time threatened with a similar fate, those of the planters who should *speak against general liberty*. This was one of those *orders* which the constitutional government determined to be *conformable to the constitution*, and in which they had solemnly *recognised its principles*, as well as *a great respect for persons and property*. But let us transcribe the energetic denunciation of criminality of which Vaublanc accused this proconsul :

" In a letter inserted in the public prints, Sonthonax declared himself clothed with the *dictatorship*, and did not hesitate to assert that he had *unlimited powers*. In this capacity he levied taxes, received immense sums, and *rendered no accounts*. He outlawed pub-

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\*. See the Moniteur of the 3d November 1796.

lic functionaries and men elected by the people, and prohibited giving them refuge, under pain of being deemed their accomplices. His extreme audacity even became his security; his accusers were thrown into prison; and he was sent back to St. Domingo really clothed with the *dictatorial purple*. He there enacted the most atrocious laws against the mere expression of men's thoughts, and ordered the estates of all planters who had gone into neutral countries to be confiscated, not even excepting those who went with commissions from himself," &c.

But it is necessary to describe how Sonthonax succeeded in being a second time invested with dictatorial authority, and obtaining *unlimited* powers. This he accomplished by promising to those who signed them, that the sale of the plantations to be sequestered would produce immense sums. In this respect, at least, the Directory were so much his dupes, that they announced officially that it would produce *two milliards*, and the Councils were still in full expectation of this rich prey, when Barbé Marbois announced, that no purchasers had offered, not even among the negroes. This information was the more mortifying to the Directory, as that body had obtained authority to sell to the latter, in small lots, the property of the absentee whites, in order, said they, *to overcome the innate sloth of most of the blacks: for, added they when soliciting this power, if we study the human heart, we shall learn that he who has property of his own is always more intimately attached to his country than he who has none.*

Thus did this plundering government only recur

to this salutary maxim, to establish means of transferring the property possessed by the whites to the blacks, who had never possessed any thing. It was to overcome the *innate sloth* of the latter, and render them *more intimately attached* to their country, that the new governors of France proposed to plunder without mercy those planters whose industry had made St. Domingo *the most flourishing colony that ever existed!*

No sooner was Sonthonax convinced that no one chose to purchase these sequestered estates, than he immediately let them to negroes, to whom he promised *one fourth* of the raw produce, retaining the remainder for the nation.

Hence we may conceive the immense interest the Directory had in defending his extortions. In this they succeeded for a time by ostentatiously comparing the large sums expended at St. Domingo by England, with their own extreme economy. It is true, indeed, that this economy must have appeared very great, since they boasted of having only paid 150,000 livres (about 6000 pounds sterling) into the hands of their agents for the Leeward Islands, and of having *remitted them nothing since their departure*. Ought we then to be surprised that they were obliged to supply the place of their remittances, either by ordering piratical expeditions against the trade of a neutral nation, who was the friend and ally \* of France, or by seizing on the property even of French republicans!

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\* This is evidently what Sonthonax alluded to in his apology, where he says, " Among the numerous causes which brought about the restoration of St. Domingo, I ought, above all, to mention the *privateers*. The gulf of Mexico has been covered with light vessels, carrying from two to twenty pieces of cannon, which have plundered

But let us inquire what became of these republicans, thus plundered and transported without even the form of a trial. As it would have been difficult to accuse them of royalism, or to have ranked them in the class of *émigrants*, the major part having either been sent to France, or come thither at their own expense to place themselves under the banners of the republic, it was thought but just to promise them in return an alimentary pension of a few sous per day for their maintenance. Yet this promise was treated in the same manner as all those which had preceded, and only added insult to injury, by a pretended charity from a government, which had forcibly taken the estates of the planters into its own hands. One of these planters, who was mentioned by name in the debates, possessed an estate which was let for 30,000 livres for the benefit of the republic, and from whom the pension promised him till his property should be restored was withheld.

Yet the Directory, who have thus plundered these unfortunate men without remorse, are incessantly reproaching the inhabitants of the other islands, and particularly of Martinique, as criminal in having

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and almost *destroyed the trade of England.*"—But as some of his hearers did not understand that by this phrase he meant the *American* trade, Villers took upon himself to explain, and asked whether the Directory were not *founded in believing* that the American ships which covered the seas were *English* vessels in *disguise*?

A few weeks after, another reporter, Couzard, appeared at the tribune, and answered the question of Villers in these words: "One fact is *certain*. At least seven eighths of the ships taken by our privateers, and confiscated for their benefit, have been captured under neutral colours, and with neutral papers and clearances. Of all these vessels taken and confiscated under neutral colours and neutral papers, *none*, or scarcely any, were really *English*: they were all really neutral," &c.—This report was delivered on the 31st August 1798.



placed themselves under the protection of England\*. The latter may judge of the fate that threatened them by that of the planters, who have persisted in their fidelity to the *Great Nation*, and to whom that nation has assigned the hospitals at Bourdeaux for an asylum. The following is the petition which these unfortunate men addressed to the legislative body on the 30th November 1795: "By what fatality are we still detained in a country where we are perishing with famine and with cold? Why are we refused the liberty of going to cultivate our estates? Citizens legislators, you are the friends of the blacks; but are you not also the friends of your own country, and the friends of humanity? *Deign, then, to be the friends of the whites.* Cast an eye of compassion on your wretched colonies. Let the unfortunate creoles, who are *heaped together* in the hospitals without fire, or food, or clothes, and who live in the *equality of the tomb*, at length attract your notice," &c.

This appeal to their compassion produced no effect on the two Councils, who persisted in turning away their eyes from this outrage. It was committed on republicans; it was committed under the cloak of the declaration of the rights of man; it was committed in the year v. of *French liberty*! Thus were the first years of that constitution signalized, which its authors represented as an *inexhaustible source of happi-*

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\* It is scarcely conceivable how Barras could join in this reproach: he who, before he was raised to the supreme magistracy, had suffered the following confession to escape him—"France has done every thing that could ruin her colonies, and the planters every thing that could save them. It is surprising that a single individual should continue his fidelity."

*ness, from which those excellent social institutions were to arise which will GIVE A NEW CHARACTER to the minds of modern nations, and as an edifice which will soon captivate the admiration and the gratitude even of those who were too long insensible to its wisdom, its moderation, and its strength.*

All these common place panegyrics, which Lamarque, as president of the Council of Five Hundred, employed in giving the thanks of the Assembly to the members who were taking leave, did not impose on the unfulfilled minority, whom the people had placed in the Councils. One of the first objects of their care was to demand of the Directory the recall of Sonthonax, who thus a second time ravaged St. Domingo with impunity. They took a still more effectual step in obtaining a decree which did them more honour than any of those they passed during the four months they sat. It enacted—"That every planter who could prove his non-emigration and his residence in France, or any neutral country, should be conveyed to St. Domingo *at the expense* of the republic, and *his property restored.*"

But this illusion was of short duration. Scarcely had the Jacobin party gained the upper hand before they revoked the promise made to the *refugees from beyond the sea*. "The presence of a great number of them," said the reporter Bordas, "would recall many *heart-rending reflections*: it would infallibly excite new troubles, in lieu of the *order and tranquillity* which we are panting to restore to those countries."

The subsequent debates have not informed us what effects this retraction has produced on the unfortunate

creoles, heaped together *without fire, or food, or clothing*, in the hospitals of Bourdeaux; but their distress must certainly have arrived at a very great height, since the view of it induced a new deputy to ascend the tribune on the 1st of April 1798, to plead their cause in the following terms:

“ Many planters, now in France, and proprietors of estates let for the benefit of the republic, are *perishing in misery*, while their property in the Antilles is pouring immense revenues into the magazines of the state. These *refugees* are the *best* and the most *faithful of citizens*. The republic owes them *justice* and *protection*. It is too powerful to stand in need of the spoils of the unfortunate; and were it in want of them, its generosity would disdain such resources. Its true strength and grandeur consists in the prosperity of its children, in the confidence inspired by its laws, in the generous enthusiasm of the citizen, who reflects that he is a member of a free state, where he has neither to fear the *caprices of iniquity*, nor the *violence of arbitrary power*. I ask, whether it be not *indispensable to justice* that they should receive from the national treasury a part, or the whole, of their advances in America?”

The reader little suspects who this advocate was, who again thus caused the plaintive voice of the destitute planters to be heard. Will it be believed that the man who thus invoked humanity, and the *indispensable laws of justice* to *protect* them from the *violence of arbitrary power* and the *caprices of iniquity*, was no other than the man of prey, who had himself caused these pretended refugees to be transported into

France, and who now calls them the *best and most faithful of citizens*? It was the Verres of the Antilles who, on his return to Paris, was allowed to take the place of his accusers in the senate; it was Sonthonax himself, hastening to anticipate whoever should be willing again to denounce his crimes, while melting at the fate of his own victims, he thus assumes the merit of pleading their cause!—No; the fasti of the French revolution, so fertile in traits of duplicity and hypocrisy, do not offer any fact that has excited so much disgust and indignation in my breast, whether on account of the name of the orator, or the artifice it displays, and the success it obtained.—His speech was received with unmixed applause, and not one individual among all his colleagues thought himself authorized to tear the mask from his iniquity; not one of his hearers dared indulge his indignation by crying out—

Quis tulerit Gracchos de seditione querentes?

Si fur displiceat Verri, homicida Miloni?

JUVENAL.

This scene of duplicity was completed by the report he at once solicited and dreaded having never been made\*; and by the continuance of that wretchedness and famine, which still destroy these victims of tyranny, who are dragging on a miserable existence in the *equality of the tomb*, while he is revelling with

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\* Laujac immediately rose to reply that he was proposing a new distribution of the *funds* appropriated to other objects. In consequence of this, the motion of Sonthonax was referred to the committee of finance, which was to him the most advantageous decision, as he was well assured they would not be able to find the needful *funds* for this restitution, though in the mean while he enjoyed the credit of having moved it.

impunity at Paris in the wealth, his rapine and oppression have procured.

He has not, however, been totally free from anxiety and solicitude ; for having, on his arrival in France, inspected the great book of proscriptions, of which he had himself filled so many pages, he found his own name written there at full length. And as there would not be wanting some officious planter to ascertain his identity, he would infallibly have been sentenced to be shot within *four and twenty hours*, had he not enjoyed the advantage of a seat among the representatives of the people, who had the precaution to shelter themselves against the military commissions by taking cognizance, at their own bar, of the inscriptions which might concern their body. Sonthonax did not lose a moment in procuring his name to be erased from the fatal list.—“ Citizens representatives,” said he, on the 14th July 1798, “ I ascend this tribune to announce to you a fact which personally concerns myself, and which will doubtless *astonish you as much as it has me*. I have just learned that my name is inscribed in a list of emigrants ; I have examined the identity of the names, and find it *exact*. Let me also take this opportunity to *complain* of the crowd of *libels* which my enemies are incessantly circulating against me. They pursue me with unexampled *fury*.” Here Sonthonax was again about to enter on the eulogy of his own administration, and to claim, as he had done in his former report, *the glory due to the restorer of peace in the Vendée of St. Domingo*. But the journal of the debates informs us that he was *interrupted* : so great, even among his associates,

was the horror excited by his crimes; so great was their indignation at hearing him *complain* of the *libels* of his *enemies*! However, he obtained his object; for they immediately erased his name from the list of emigrants.

Another orator then presented himself at the tribune, to call the attention of the legislative body to the *melancholy situation of the refugees and transported inhabitants of the colonies*. "In France," said he, "they are destitute of every thing. Out of twenty-five livres per month, which the law has granted them as a *relief*, they receive scarcely three or four livres per decade; and there are some among them to whom fifteen, sixteen, and even eighteen months allowance are still due. Too long have the wretched planters groaned in misery; too long have they endured their sufferings in silence. Grant, citizens legislators, that by your *beneficence* their hearts may once more be open to the soft impressions of joy and gratitude."

This speech, the last that has been pronounced in behalf of the whites who were expelled from the colonies, was delivered by a black senator named Mentor, to whom I formerly alluded when speaking of the successors of General Pichegru. The humanity of this negro, who is at this day the only advocate of the whites in the senate of the Great Nation, deserves a distinguished place in its annals.

I have spoken the more at large on the subject of St. Domingo, because that island produced about two thirds of all the colonial commodities which were once so abundant a source of commerce and of riches to

France. To complete the picture of its ruin, only one fact remains to be added. I mean, that the same report in which Perrée announced, that in 1790 the produce of St. Domingo had increased to 195 millions, informs us, that *in the year v. it had been reduced to ten millions* \*. Such have been the ravages of the revolution in that flourishing settlement, which produced to France more than four of her finest domestic provinces !

Nor must we suppose that her other islands in the American archipelago have better escaped the effects of the revolutionary storm. Martinique, which alone remained uninjured by its fury, owes that good fortune merely to the chance of war, which has placed it in the hands of the English, as well as St. Lucia and Tobago.

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\* This deputy added, " *Let us suppose one fourth more for the year vi. or twelve millions five hundred thousand livres.*" Though this supposition was certainly not very satisfactory, yet it would have been far from being realized, if, in the course of the year vi. the English army had not evacuated the part of the island cultivated by royalists, which produced exactly three times as much in proportion as that occupied by emancipated negroes. Before we add these amounts to those of which Perrée speaks, we must recollect, that the republican commandant who took possession of that territory, being a negro general, he must necessarily have begun with the emancipation of his brethren, that is, with taking them from their industry ; so that we may consider these districts, which till then were untouched, as nearly erased from the list of productive lands. This too, if I am not mistaken, is one of those conquests which France will hereafter deplore ; for these parts being in high cultivation, it would have been happy for her had they continued till the return of peace under the protection of Great Britain. In the present state of things it is more than doubtful, whether St. Domingo yields the tenth part of the raw produce it furnished before the revolution. This amount scarcely enables the planters to pay for the manufactures of England, and the corn which is still brought to them by those of the Americans who choose to expose themselves to capture as *English vessels in disguise*.

Guadaloupe, which still continues in the possession of the French \*, is groaning beneath the tyranny of Victor Hugues, who has placed it under military law; by means of which he has metamorphosed half his negroes into soldiers, and forces the rest to work, not, as formerly, by the lash, but by military execution. As to the whites, their fate has been no less deplorable than at the Cape: of this the following instance was mentioned in the sitting of the 29th May. 1797:—  
 “ Guadaloupe has witnessed the execution of the aged Mahordiers, a man eighty years old, and father of eleven children, on the deposition of some negroes, who accused him of having spoken against *general liberty*.”

Although the French have lost Pondicherry, and all their factories in Asia, they still retain two valuable possessions in the Indian seas. Yet these are much less important, on account of the prosperity they have acquired, than of that of which they were susceptible, had the old government continued in existence.

In speaking of the Isles of France, and of Bourbon, it is impossible not to admire the firmness with which the inhabitants have so long repelled both the disorganizing commissaries and the poisonous decrees sent out by the mother country. Yet, to obtain a pardon for not suffering themselves to be thrown

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\* Much having of late been said of *Cayenne*, which the Fructidorians have converted into a kind of Botany Bay for non-juring priests, incorrigible legislators, and refractory Directors, it is not perhaps superfluous to add, that Guiane was the most insignificant of the French colonies; and that even before it had been ravaged by the revolution, or was destined to be the *ultramarine Bastille*, the expenses incurred on account of that settlement, in time of peace, were nearly equal to the value of the produce it yielded to the mother country.



into confusion by these decrees, and by rapacious proconsuls, they were obliged to present the following humble petition:—" Warned by the calamities of Cayenne, and the devastation of St. Domingo, we have been desirous to defend ourselves from *pillage* and from *death*, and to preserve to France the only two colonies which she retains in the Indian seas."

To *preserve* themselves for the mother country, in spite of her folly, they have been forced to disobey the law which ordered the immediate emancipation of all their slaves: but they bound themselves, at the same time, to diminish slavery by degrees, and to prepare their negroes for the arrival of a *period*, when engagements for a term might be substituted for absolute emancipation. This solemn promise seemed, however, to satisfy the *friends of the blacks* in the two Councils, till six weeks after the 18th. Fructidor, when Dufay again called for vengeance on the colonial assembly of the Isle of France, which, said he, has raised the *standard of REVOLT*, and ignominiously driven out the agents of the Executive Directory. At hearing the word *revolt* they were on the point of passing some thundering resolution, had not Echassériaux run to the tribune, to remind his colleagues that it was *at the fire of the passions displayed at that tribune, that the torches had been lighted which had set the colonies in a blaze; that violence and exaggeration had destroyed every thing; and that they stood in need of gentle remedies and dispassionate deliberations* \*.

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\* Here, perhaps, it will be proper to observe, that the same deputy who endeavoured thus to calm the *passions* which have set the colonies in a *blaze*, and acknowledged that the manumission of

This reproof only appeased them for a few days; Riou soon renewed his attack, and repeated, that these planters had *withdrawn their obedience from the law and from the constitution*. *The Isle of France*, said he, *has preserved its monarchic government!* After this exordium, it should seem he was about to demand some exemplary punishment; but, on the contrary, the fear of driving them to despair, and throwing them into the hands of the English, and, above all, the want of the necessary means of disorganization, induced him to suffer the resentments of the Great Nation to yield to its impotence. Hence he suddenly softened his tone, and agreed, “ that *the same measures cannot be applied to this colony as to St. Domingo, and requested his colleagues to throw the veil of indulgence and of amnesty over this event.*”

Although this *amnesty*, like that of La Vendée, will only continue till an opportunity offers to violate it with impunity, the Isle of France, and that of Bourbon, continue to belong to the republic. Both these settlements, however, are still in their infancy: in fact, they never exported much to the mother country, and even cost two millions of livres annually for the expenses of their governments.

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the slaves had converted those islands into *burdensome possessions*, has lately published a work, entitled, *Des Intérêts des Puissances*; in which he recommends to the French government to make *the emancipation of the blacks in the English colonies* ONE OF THE ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS of a general peace: and he quotes the example of that conqueror, who imposed no other condition on the conquered than the abolition of human sacrifices.

This work is recently published, and its author passes for the most moderate of the Fructidorian party. Such is *one of the essential conditions*, without which this party is not willing to grant peace to the English nation!

To appreciate, therefore, the immense amount of the losses suffered by France, we must turn our eyes towards St. Domingo. The view we have just taken of the sacking of that island is sufficient to prove, that it has sunk into a condition nearly similar to that which preceded its cultivation; and that it will require almost as long an interval of time to restore it to its former prosperity, as originally to establish that settlement. But what numerous difficulties remain to be overcome! How can the true proprietors be restored to their estates, on which they would find their own slaves established as masters under the name of *farmers*? How would it be possible to bring back those slaves, not, I say, to servitude, but merely to the subordination of citizens? Many people seem to flatter themselves, that for this a military system of government will be sufficient; but what enormous expenses will not the administration of the island cost! And supposing the government could find means to pay them \*, of whom shall the ruined

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\* In the budget for the year vii. 7,199,050 livres were ostentatiously voted for the colonial department; and the reporter, when moving for that sum, added, *It is with pain we perceive these sums to be far from adequate to the necessities of that most interesting portion of the republic.*

It is needless to add, that the colonies will not very speedily see these seven millions any where but in the decree. It will not, however, be amiss to transcribe some part of this report, which was dated the 23d August 1798: "Since the revolution the colonies have been almost entirely abandoned to their internal resources; the mother country has afforded them very little aid. *It will be otherwise in the year vii.* We must necessarily remit to St. Domingo a considerable sum. It cannot be concealed that *great resources* are requisite, whether *again to break up the soil* of that precious colony, or to maintain there a sufficient force to restrain the audacious enterprises of its domestic and foreign enemies. So many objects to be accomplished, *so much evil to be repaired, so many important hopes to be im-*

planters of St. Domingo obtain the loans indispensably necessary for the cultivation of sugar, and for rebuilding the houses that have been burned? And lastly, how can the immense blank in the population of this island be restored?

Admitting, however, that at the return of peace France should obtain the restitution of all her colonies; admitting even that it is possible to establish there a government sufficiently powerful to disarm and subjugate the negroes, and bring them back to their labour, still it will appear impossible to indulge a hope of their yielding, till a very distant period, one half the produce they formerly shipped to the mother country. And if, as it appears, this half was consumed by the inhabitants of France; if it is true, as Villaret asserts, that these commodities are there become *articles of first necessity*, it will be very long before they will have any overplus to sell to foreign nations.

I am not, however, of opinion with Vaublanc, that they will then be reduced to the necessity of *assuming the manners of the Spartans*. It is rather more probable, that their poverty will deprive vast numbers of the luxuries imported from the colonies; and that, by means of these privations, they will at length be able to dispose of sugars and coffees, to the value of some millions of livres annually, to those of their

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*mediately realized*, require great resources, and these resources must necessarily be taken from the national treasury. The same is true of the Isles of France and of Reunion (Bourbon), as well as of our settlements on the coast of Africa; their expenses must be defrayed, *as they were formerly*, by the mother country," &c.

In the expenses of the current year 900,000 livres are promised, for the alimentary pensions of the refugees from beyond sea.

neighbours who are in a condition to pay for these articles. This sale, however, would cover but a very small part of the enormous deficit in the trade of France, of which it now remains to detail the particulars. How will it be possible wholly to remedy it? And if this should not in fact take place, I ask, with Admiral Villaret, *during how long a course of years will she be able to support the constant draining of her specie?*

What a contrast then will the prosperity of the past form with the adversity of the future! In how short a period have the revolutionists of France completed this work of universal destruction, dispersing, confounding, and annihilating all the elements of future prosperity and riches which had accumulated every blessing upon that country under the happy auspices of a supreme magistrate!

Yet to this horrid picture of national ruin and desolation, the Directory have coldly opposed the assertion, that *the resources of France are entire!*

## CHAPTER V.

*Decline of the principal Manufactures of France. Frauds committed in them. The Cause of Usury, its Progress and Effects. Rise in the Price of Labour.*

*WHY* are our manufactures in a situation of which we have never yet beheld an example? was one of the eleven problems publicly proposed by the directorial papers to all the literary men of Paris; and the following was the answer of the writer who appears to have been most master of his subject: "The manufactures are in a state of stagnation, because those who directed them have been tormented and ruined, and even destroyed with case-shot executions; and to keep up those which still subsist, loans would be necessary, the interest of which would absorb the profits."

Though of this reply every word is strictly true, yet it is extremely incomplete. To supply its defects, it will be necessary to take a comparative view of the state of French manufactures before they fell into the stagnation complained of, and of which the cause is inquired.

It would be difficult to conceive, without the elucidation afforded by M. Necker's work, that even before the revolution it was equally true of the manufactures and the agricultural produce of France, that they were unequal to paying for the articles of consumption and raw materials imported from abroad.

Of the most flourishing of all her manufactures, that of silk, France formerly exported to the value of ninety millions of livres. But the city of Lyons, which was the principal seat of these manufactures, is now no longer distinguished among the large towns of republican France, except for the continual *anxieties* it gives her leaders, and the expenses it occasions. They are totally unable to repress the numerous crimes that are committed there ; and when they dared to complain of them eighteen months ago, C. Jourdan immediately replied in language which seemed to describe by anticipation the denouement of the revolution : “ It cannot be concealed,” said he, “ that Lyons contains more thieves and malefactors than any other commune. The destruction of its manufactures is the real cause. *It is in the soil of MISERY that CRIMES most spontaneously flourish.*”

This was a sufficient indication that it was necessary to call Dubois Crancé to an account for the *crimes* of the inhabitants of Lyons, and the *misery* that gave them birth : for it was he that reduced their extensive manufactures to ashes, and carried his ferocious barbarity even to bombard their hospitals. What ! shall the founders of the French republic, who are themselves guilty of destroying even the asylum of the unfortunate, shall they be surprised and indignant, that the miserable inhabitants who have escaped the storm should thirst for revenge, or abandon themselves to crimes \* ?

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\* In the sitting of the 24th July 1797, Mayevre brought forward new details, which proved that the *crimes* committed at Lyons arise from the miserable state of the finances, which do not admit

A few months before, the minister Rame! had convened the commercial deputies, and announced to them, that *useful manufacturers were about to spring up in the cloisters which had converted France into a vast Thebais*. He added, that *Lyons was renewing its manufactories and repairing its looms*; and that its *important productions would console the nation for the anxieties it had occasioned*. Unfortunately, however, at the period when he indulged these flattering hopes, the Jacobins, who were reunited around the standard of Babœuf, were preparing their famous *manifesto of equality*, in which these words appear: "We will consent to any thing rather than give up equality; yes, we will suffer every thing else to be swept away, if that remain. *Perish the arts themselves*, if their cultivation deprives us of true equality."

Justly alarmed at the progress of this sect, and the new misfortunes with which they were threatened, the Lyonese were the first to give the signal of resistance, and indulged in some excesses against the faction of Babœuf, which furnished the Directory with a pretext to declare that city *in a state of siege*.

The effects of this measure were soon apparent.

of supplying the police with the necessary funds. He represented the inhabitants as *still lying among the smoking ruins of their houses and of their manufactories, and the wrecks of their looms*: and addressed their destroyers in the following terms: "In what *populous city* are not crimes numerous? And in what commune can we expect to find them more frequent than at Lyons, which is covered with ruins calculated to become lurking-places for thieves; in that city, now stripped of the walls, which, before its siege, protected it from their inroads; that city, which *has no police*, whether through the negligence of the *bureau central*, or for want of funds; the withholding of which prevents even the lighting it, and favours crimes by its obscurity."



“ The manufacturer takes his deserted loom to pieces,” said Mayeuvre, a few days after; “ the workshops are deserted; trade is entirely suspended; the value of money rises; bills on foreign parts are in great request, in consequence of that prudence which prompts every man to place his fortune in safety; and all the good citizens ask each other, whether they ought not for ever to abandon a city which is persecuted, although tranquil; a city which is incessantly calumniated; a city which, since its *memorable catastrophe*, has only sought to heal, by its industry, those wounds which are still bleeding, and are continually opened afresh by persecution.”

These lamentations evidently prove, that since their memorable catastrophe the Lyonnese had again set many of their looms to work. So powerfully and so obstinately do the habits of industry and the force of civilization struggle in an active nation, where the arts have once been cherished, against the attempts of a barbarous government to destroy them! So often must the blows of the latter be repeated before they can put a stop to the exertions of industry! Notwithstanding the new persecutions this city has experienced, its inhabitants still continue to manufacture silk stockings, gauzes, taffetas, and ribands; of which, no doubt, a very moderate quantity will suffice for the home consumption of those classes who can still afford these luxuries. Yet though the most important manufactories of Lyons, those of velvets, brocades, and satins, and, in a word, all those which demand extensive capitals, are, perhaps, for ever abandoned, it would be unjust to consider the revolv-

lution and its authors as the sole cause of their fall ; for at the period when Dubois Crancé was ordered to rase these manufactories to the ground, they were already evidently in their decline, merely in consequence of muslins having supplanted the use of silk throughout Europe.

Lyons is at this very time *in a state of siege*, and her richest manufactures only exist in the memory of those who but yesterday went there to admire that wonderful display of French industry and activity. And will it be believed, that when it was no longer possible to conceal that this work of destruction was completed, a leading man in the legislature endeavoured to make his colleagues believe that the English government was the real cause of these evils ! “ Its destructive hand,” said he, “ has broken in pieces the flourishing looms of Lyons, as it has dragged to the scaffold, or to prison, under the slightest pretexts, all the heads of our national manufactories, and those of the manufactories of Rouen, of Sedan, of St. Quentin, of Cambray. From this tribune let the tocsin be sounded against the *eternal enemies* of France.”

Thus spoke Jean Debry on the 21st December 1797 ; and this language, perhaps, was necessary to prepare the public mind for the message of the 10th February following, when the Directory applied for two millions of livres to distribute among the manufacturers of Lyons, and the principal towns of the republic ; *which*, said they, *are in a state of stagnation truly alarming*. The inhabitants of those towns are, however, too well aware of the value of such promises to place any reliance in their fulfilment. But what can

be more instructive than to behold the present government thus reduced to give charity to those very inhabitants of Lyons, who, under the monarchy, paid immense sums into the royal treasury, and rendered the whole world tributary to France?

I have spoken the more fully of these manufactures, not only because they hold the first rank in France, but because those travellers who seem the most captivated with the new order of things, themselves declare, that, *except some of the articles made at Lyons, the manufactures of France are every where in a state of depression, from which there is no hope of their recovering\**. Unfortunately, this *hope of recovery*, which some of the manufacturers of Lyons cherished two years since, seems to be every day more remote, since that city is now reduced even to export its silk raw, and is no longer possessed of hands, or capitals, or machinery, for converting it into manufactures. Before the revolution, France annually purchased raw silk from foreign nations to the amount of about twenty-seven millions; and having worked it up together with her own, exported a part, after having increased its value to three times its original price; but now she is forced clandestinely to sell her own silk to the manufacturers of Berlin †.

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\* See *Itinéraire sur Paris*, by J. L. Meyer. "The manufactures of France," adds this learned German, "resemble the ruins of a magnificent building, of which the foundation has given way."

† See the *Moniteur* of the 12th September 1796, No. 356, containing a letter from Lyons, in which the trade of that city loudly remonstrates against a permission granted to the citizens *Leveau and Co.* to export 2000 quintals of raw silk. It is remarkable, that the complainants do not even allege, that any of them have sufficient capitals either to purchase or manufacture these silks. They

As silk manufactures formed a more considerable portion of the annual exportations of France than all her other manufactures together, it is important to observe, that Nantes, Tours, and Orleans, which, next to Lyons, were the most considerable seats of these manufactures, have equally suffered, and are represented as having been totally annihilated under the reign of terror. The destruction of those of Avignon since that unfortunate province has been subject to France is well known. Even the little town of Bédouin has beheld its *numerous silk manufactories* consigned to a *general conflagration* \*, as a punishment for having suffered a tree of liberty to be cut down. This, it will be said, was the act of Robespierre: be it so. But let us examine the conduct of the present government towards those manufacturers of Bédouin who survived this memorable catastrophe. Goupilleau informs us, that "in lieu of receiving any relief, they have only experienced a continued series of misfortunes." He adds, that "to force them to pay the arrears of their taxes, *garnisiers*, have been established

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instit solely on the *very languishing state of their manufactories, and the real excellence which their articles derive from the mixture of the silk of France with that of Piedmont*. All this is extremely possible, yet I cannot discover how the *languishing state of their manufactories* can be an additional motive to complete the ruin of agriculture by condemning the planters of mulberry-trees to let their produce rot in their warehouses, lest the admixture of French raw silk should give a real excellence to foreign manufactures.

\* Dubois Dubay, in a report of the 10th July 1798, expressed himself as follows: "Every one knows," said he, "that during the reign of terror *all the houses and the numerous silk manufactories* of that unfortunate commune were cruelly and unmercifully consigned to a *general conflagration*; that the fields were condemned to sterility, all the inhabitants proscribed, and those who were possessed of property dragged to the scaffold, or thrown into prison."

among them, *in the caverns they have dug*, after having escaped from death and from the flames, although they want the most indispensable necessities of life \*."

This trait of fiscal tyranny, which took place in the year vi. shows with what fidelity the Directory keep their solemn promise to the French nation, *not to neglect any thing that could contribute to their prosperity*; and it shows in what manner they endeavour to repair at home what they dare to call the fury of *Vandalism*; —as if the Vandals had ever, like the Jacobins, destroyed merely for the pleasure of destroying!

It is no less remarkable, that at the time when the revolutionary government had been at so great an expense to raise Lyons to the ground, and to burn Bédouin, it had incurred sacrifices of considerable magnitude to preserve the manufacture of the Gobelins at Paris, that of La Savonnerie, and that of Sévres. Nor was it without reason that they took these steps; for these establishments had evidently contributed to display the taste of the French artists. Barbé Marbois acknowledged, that these celebrated works would *long since have ceased to exist*, had they not been aided by the *munificence* of the administration; and he advised them to continue this protection

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\* On the 9th August 1798 it was agreed to withdraw these *gar-nisers*, and pass to the account of *profit and loss*, the arrears of the taxes of Bédouin. This signal favour, however, was not granted till Goupilleau had addressed the Council of Five Hundred in the following apostrophe: "Do you reflect, that when the 260 youths from this commune, who have so often triumphed over the kings of Europe, return from those victories, they will find their native spot reduced to a heap of ashes, their fathers in the grave, and the surrounding plains condemned to permanent sterility?"

in the same report wherein he so strongly recommended the strictest attention to economy. But the funds then promised to them have evidently been diverted for the expenses of the war, since Portier has announced, a year after, that for eight months the manufacturers of the Gobelins have not received any part of their salaries; and that *those unfortunate men were nearly starving to death* \*. This object was referred to a committee, who were to present a report *within three days*, which as they did not do, it is to be feared these superb royal establishments will soon be annihilated.

It is asserted, that Sedan, Louviers, Elbeuf, Carcassonne, and Abbeville, have preserved a part of their manufactories of fine cloth; and that, with the assistance of those which are made in the conquered provinces, France may still supply her own consumption of light cloths. Were this assertion as true as it is doubtful, we must not forget that she is indebted to Spain for the fine wool employed in those manufactures. She ought, above all things, to endeavour to restore her coarse woollen and linen manufactures; and those of Rouen, which, before the revolution, nearly equalled the English in carding, spinning, and manufacturing cotton. Such are

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\* See the *Moniteur* of the 12th February 1798, and the report of Daubermesnil in that of the 30th September following, wherein he demanded the sacrifice of 180,000 livres, as *indispensably* necessary to revive the activity of the Gobelins. This last report states, "that the produce of this manufacture has as yet been employed in fitting up the palaces of the legislative body and of the Directory; that some suits of hangings have been given as *presents*; and that a small number have been sold at a time of distress, to relieve the necessities of the establishment itself."

the manufactures which are truly *irvaluable*, though much less so for the export trade, which is but a secondary object, than on account of the home consumption, the activity of which is a true barometer of the prosperity of nations.

This brings me to speak of the manufactories for printing cottons, on which the old government placed so high a value, that it made considerable sacrifices to entice workmen from Switzerland into Alsace. It would, perhaps, have been better to have at first applied to the increase of the quantity of cottons manufactured, by improving and multiplying the spinning machines. Though France imported from the Indies and from Switzerland the major part of her cottons, yet she manufactured a considerable quantity at home before the revolution. But Malès, having discovered that her rivals now supply almost the whole of her consumption, moved, on the 13th January 1797, that this branch of trade should be prohibited, in order to force them to make peace. *I am unwilling, said he, that our specie should pass into their hands; for this is the price of peace. In fact, every écu which is carried out of France assists England in paying the assassins who are armed against us.*

Fortunately for the cotton-printers of France, Johannot appeased this impetuosity, by informing the Council, that the manufactories of Alsace and the Low Countries would be wholly annihilated, if the importation and consumption of unprinted India goods, with which they were furnished by the English, were prohibited. “It is a fact,” said he, “that our printers cannot procure more than 100,000 pieces of

French-manufacture. Hence they would experience a deficit of 400,000 pieces *per annum*, which would ruin our manufactures and our trade, and paralyse the industry of the country."

Johannot was the more worthy of credit with regard to this fact, as he was himself proprietor of considerable printing-works in Alsace. Thus did a regard for the manufactures of France overcome their hatred towards England, and, in lieu of prohibiting the importation of India goods, they were subjected to a duty of seventy-five livres per quintal.

This duty, however small its amount, having given rise to a contraband trade, it has been proposed, a year after its institution, to diminish it. But Dentzell caused this motion to be rejected, and stated "two great inconveniences: first, that of infringing the law which prohibited English merchandise; and secondly, that it facilitated the introduction of articles which, by their competition, would necessarily prove injurious to the industry of France." This orator added, that France only prints 600,000 pieces in a year; and that to reduce the duty on their importation, would be to ruin the manufactures of Rouen and all the spinning-mills. He concluded with some anathemas against the English East India Company, *which inundates all Europe with merchandise torn from the inhabitants of the banks of the Ganges, for very inconsiderable prices.*

One of his colleagues, however, immediately replied with great propriety, "that with the best intentions possible he had fallen into an error; for by thus *punishing* the English, he would reduce 40,000



manufacturers of the incorporated countries to misery, and would deprive the revenue of a million of livres a year."

The duty having continued at seventy-five livres \*, the English factors have also continued to *inundate* the republic with ordinary India goods, which France can herself no longer *tear from the inhabitants of the banks of the Ganges for very inconsiderable prices*, because she has been driven out of all her settlements in Asia. If, therefore, 500,000 pieces of goods are entered at her custom-houses, it is very probable, that an equal number are imported in contraband; especially if we include muslins and calicoes manufactured or printed in Switzerland. No doubt the blow lately struck by the French at the industry of that country will considerably diminish the branch of importation here spoken of; but this will ultimately operate only as an additional premium in favour of the goods of the English East India Company, and the manufactures of Manchester.

We may conclude the subject of the manufacture and printing of coarse calicoes with the following

\* No pieces are admitted that do not weigh two pounds ten ounces; the rest are deemed *muslins*, and can only be imported in contraband.

The price of the admitted cottons is, in London, from 20s. to 70s. the piece, and their average, at the lowest, must amount to thirty livres Tournois, at which rate the 400,000 or 500,000 pieces required by France will amount to fifteen millions of livres (six millions sterling †). But if we add the fine goods or muslins which are imported contraband, and those manufactured and printed in Switzerland, there is every reason to believe this branch of importation alone amounts to near forty millions (sixteen millions sterling) annually. It was still more considerable formerly, and would be so now if the consumers were less impoverished.

† See note on the value of livres in Chap. VII.

extract from the report of a special commission, of which Boullay Patay was the chairman, delivered on the 28th. December 1798: " Your committee, had they judged it necessary, might have proved by a pretty accurate statement the annual deficiency in this branch; arising, on the one hand, from the scarcity of employment, and on the other from the difficulty of selling. The quantity produced by our manufactures, comparatively with their former state, is in the decreasing ratio of four to one; or 25,000 yards are now made where 100,000 were formerly manufactured. Nor do we now see any kind of rivalry or competition in this branch of trade. The chances are entirely against France; and your authority, if manifested by a wise though severe law, since such a law is called for by the imperious circumstances of the case, may re-establish the equilibrium which is at once so needful and so anxiously desired. Were the duty collected at the barriers six times as heavy as it is, however justly it might be deemed exorbitant, the balance would not be established between the manufacturers of France and those of foreign countries. We consider it as certain, that goods imported at a great expense from foreign parts are re-exported to be printed; and that they are afterwards again brought in to be sold under the eyes of our manufacturers themselves."

The more fully to prove the decline of all the other manufactures that have escaped the destroying dæmon of the revolution, and to complete the statement of the particulars which are still concealed, let us refer to the report presented on the 18th March 1798, by

a special committee appointed to make a report on the necessity of immediately re-establishing the *leads*. These were a kind of seal, which, under the old government, was put to most piece-goods manufactured within the kingdom, to prove that they were of the width, length, and quality required. These *seals* had, till then, saved the buyers the necessity of examining their goods, which were usually sold without breaking bulk (*sous corde*). But the sect of the economists, who, as early as 1779, had procured some manufactures to be freed from this law, caused all these marks to be suppressed in 1791, as an absurd restraint on the unlimited freedom of trade. “The result,” says the Chairman Laporte, “is as follows:—since the suppression of the leads, the Rouen  $\frac{3}{4}$  cottons are only an ell and  $\frac{1}{16}$  wide; those of  $\frac{3}{4}$  only  $\frac{7}{8}$ ; those of  $\frac{3}{4}$  only  $\frac{3}{4}$ ; those of  $\frac{3}{4}$  only  $\frac{5}{8}$ , &c. The same frauds take place in the cambrics made at St. Quentin, Valenciennes, and Cambray. In lieu of a national seal, the manufacturer now annexes to goods of a low quality the mark of a house who only make fine goods. The consumer finding himself thus imposed on, determines in future to supply himself elsewhere.—The merchants of foreign countries abandon manufactures which offer no guaranty against imposition.—The *ci-devant* Brittany makes linens peculiarly adapted to the Spanish settlements: these manufactures, which were once very carefully attended to, had acquired so extensive a name, that they exported annually to the value of more than seven millions of livres. The system of indefinite liberty has caused this important trade to decline. The manufacturers too eagerly

adopted it; and the hope of successful competition led them to make their goods cheaper, and consequently worse. This desertion of principle has induced the Spaniards, whose repeated complaints were slighted, to purchase of the Silesians. *France has lost this immense branch of trade.* We may form some judgment of its importance, when it is known that the mere wages for manufacturing furnished a subsistence to above 100,000 individuals of all ages and both sexes. Carcassonne was in possession of a trade to the Levant, for almost the whole of the cloths made in that commune; but the manufacturers have by degrees lowered the quality of their cloths, by making them without method and discrimination. From that period we may date the *decline* of one of the most important branches of foreign commerce enjoyed by France. The English are now in possession of it, and we are reduced to *glean* after them. Previous to the year 1779 the cloth trade was so flourishing, that we exported to the amount of thirty-three millions; but since the system of unlimited liberty has prevailed, these exportations have been reduced to eleven millions \*. The same *want of faith* took place in the silk trade of Lyons, and in those goods in which gold and silver were used. In consequence of these frauds our manufactures have fallen into discredit in the Levant, and the republic *has lost* a valuable branch of commerce."

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\* The time here spoken of was ten years before the revolution; at which period, and not in consequence of this system, the exportation of light woollen cloths was reduced from thirty-three to eleven millions.

It is an important fact, that none of the manufacturers whom this reporter accused have made the least attempt to refute the facts he states; and the public would have been deprived of all these confessions, which are equally imprudent and instructive, had they not been necessary to prepare the way for a motion to re-establish the seals, by making it the instrument of a tax. Yet, although this was unanimously rejected as *the worst of taxes*, the report still exists, and it deserved to be transcribed at length; not so much on account of the just conclusions drawn by the reporter, as of the facts it contains; for the suppression of the *leads*, to which he exclusively attributes the decline of the French manufactures, is but one of its most inconsiderable causes. Laporte was, perhaps, intentionally silent on the three great obstacles, which will, for a long while, impede the revival of the manufactures of France; namely, the excessive rise in the interest of money—that of the price of labour—and the decay of the roads and canals; which, as Echassériaux has well expressed, are *the feet and the wings of commerce* \*.

The first of these obstacles deserves full investigation. But before we trace the origin and effects of usury, we ought to state the facts which prove that

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\* This decay has rendered the conveyance of goods considerably slower, dearer, and less safe, than formerly; and has lately furnished the carriers with a pretext to *change their route at pleasure, or from motives of avarice*. This was the language of Bérard on the 10th April 1798, when recommending *the immediate suppression of this abuse, the consequences of which have already proved most fatal*. This deputy even went so far as to assert, that some carriers, when entrusted with the conveyance of merchandise, *appropriated to their own use the goods thus confided to their care*.

the general rate of interest in France is at this day about 25 *per cent. per annum.*

The Paris papers advertise the names of various houses there, who periodically renew the offer of lending money on *pledges at four per cent. per month.* One of these offers it at 3 *per cent. per month*; but this is on pledges, which, if not more secure, are at least more saleable than most others, such as coffee, sugar, &c.

The *Mont de Piété* of Paris lend at 3 *per cent. per month.*

The *inscriptions* of the consolidated third, which bear 5 *per cent.* interest, were, on the 1st April 1799, at two years purchase; so that they would yield 50 *per cent. per annum*, if the interest were paid in specie, as was solemnly promised; or if the *bons* with which they are paid did not lose 34 *per cent.*

Paper, on most of the merchants of Paris, at short dates, and with good endorsers, is discounted there at the rate of 1½, 2, and even 3 *per cent. per month.*

The wholesale dealers, who, both at Paris and in the provinces, generally give a credit of six weeks to respectable retail shopkeepers, allow an abatement of 2¼ *per cent.* discount for ready money.

In addition to these facts the following will appear particularly surprising:—Some time after the fall of Robespierre a new *caisse d'escompte* was formed at the hotel of Maffiac, through the medium of which some of the best houses in Paris made their payments and receipts. At its commencement, it discounted their paper at ½ *per cent. per month*; but this only as far as the amount of their shares or deposits. Although

the credit of this bank suffered a small shock by the event of the 18th Fructidor, yet as the Directory have had sufficient moderation not to lay their hands on its funds, the proprietors have ventured to issue notes, and still continue their operations, which, however, are extremely limited in consequence of the smallness of the capital employed, and the danger of increasing it. There is also another establishment at Paris, nearly of a similar nature, called the *Caisse du Commerce*, or commercial bank, which discounts short paper, endorsed by three respectable houses \*, at three quarters *per cent. per month*.

Towards the commencement of the present year, a bank was established at Rouen, on nearly a similar plan, and has issued notes to bearer for 100, 500, and 1000 livres, by means of which it discounts paper on Paris for its proprietors, at one and a quarter *per cent. per month*.

However exorbitant this interest may appear, should these two banks keep their ground, they may render the most important services to the trade of Paris and of Rouen. It is to this kind of banks that I alluded in my last work ; but I took care to enlarge on the imminent danger of attempting such establishments until order is restored ; and perhaps the French will soon repent of having been too precipitate in this respect. In fact, we scarcely know whether it is more surprising that the establishment of these two banks has been risked under the government of the Directory, that the latter have not yet ventured to put

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\* See the *Moniteur* of the 13th September, No. 357.

them in sequestration, or that while these banks were discounting at from five to fifteen *per cent. per annum*, several others should be successful in obtaining four *per cent. per month* on pledges.

It is evident that the above-mentioned banks at Paris have had no influence in lowering the general rate of interest, at least for those who are not proprietors; since one of the questions proposed by the above-mentioned anonymous banker was, "While the paper of merchants in general cannot be discounted under two or three *per cent. per month*, why is that of *some houses* done at three quarters *per cent.*?" — This question clearly shows that there are *some houses* who can get their paper discounted at the rate of nine *per cent. per annum*. The writer who answered this inquiry says, "*Some banking-houses have proved their honesty and good faith during the period of paper circulation. Their fortunes are nearly independent of political events.*" But this explanation requires a further elucidation, which this writer could not give while situated under the superintendence of the minister of police. It shall appear in its proper place.

Although we have very little intelligence of what passes in the provincial towns, it is evident the want of specie must in them be still more pressing, since most of the capitalists, the non-emigrant nobles, those men who have made their fortunes, and the army contractors, have settled at Paris, either because that city is now the centre, or rather the only scene of commercial transactions, or because they find the police there better regulated and more secure than in the departments, and escape much more easily, not



only the re-actions of parties, but the *animadversion* to which the rich, and particularly those who have lately become so, are exposed.

These are all the documents I have been able to collect relative to the present rate of interest in France : but they are sufficient to prove that it is four or five times as high as before the revolution, and that those who would engage in any trade or manufactory could not procure a capital without paying so exorbitant an interest, that it would *absorb all their profits*. These same documents afford a solution of another question proposed by the above-mentioned banker, and which he ought himself to be better qualified to answer than any other person: " Why do the bankers of France no longer enjoy any credit abroad, and why do they not grant any to our manufacturers and tradesmen at home, as they did formerly \*?" Lastly, these documents prove that the rate of interest has rather risen than fallen since the beginning of the year 1797, when the commercial deputies complained " that it had risen to so exorbitant a rate, that no *parallel* could be found in the most calamitous times of *ancient* or modern history." They might perhaps be mistaken with regard to *ancient* times; but it is im-

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\* The following is the answer that was made to this question : " France is not in a state of tranquillity, and foreign nations believe it to be much more *agitated* than it really is."—This last trait gives rise to a suspicion that the Deputy Arnould was the anonymous answerer of these eleven questions; for in his long report of the 26th August, on the then state of France, he points out *loans* to the government as the last and only resource, assuring them that their circumstances were not so desperate but they might yet re-establish their *credit* with foreign nations, and adds, that, " according to the *best observers*, France is tending to a state of TRANQUILLITY: capitalists possess a certain *perspicacity*, which does not suffer them to be deceived."

possible not to agree with them, when, after informing Ramel *that the capitals were dissipated or buried, and the manufactories shut up*, they represented to him, *that nothing but TIME and the WISEST LAWS could remedy such numerous evils.*

It is notorious that the *wise laws* to which that minister resorted to diminish the rate of interest, were laws whose sole object was to draw the little capital which was not yet *dissipated or buried*, into the national treasury, by means of the purchase of confiscated lands.

And what has been the result? A new reduction of the manufactures that still existed, and an additional rise in the rate of interest. These two consequences were inevitable: for where is there a Frenchman so insensate as to expose his fortune by entering into speculations, wherein, unless he is satisfied with ten or twelve *per cent.* profit, he cannot stand in competition with foreign manufacturers, while the government affords a prospect of thirty, forty, or even fifty *per cent.* by laying out his money in confiscated lands? Rœderer pointed out this rock above a year ago\*: but those who were at the helm in France paid no attention to his warning, and now they have split upon it, they make the same signals of distress which the commercial deputies had thrown out long before. "One of the most powerful causes of the general distress," said Crassous, on the 23d March

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\* "It is natural to suppose," said he, "that those who establish manufactories, or enter into trades, would not be content with less interest on their capital than they would derive from the purchase of lands nor can any thing be more just."

1798, " is the exorbitant rise in the rate of interest. This ideal value, attributed to the *sign* of riches, impedes and shackles the transactions of business, and opposes a vivifying circulation. These are *real* and important evils, and each individual feels them more or less severely. But the consequences are still more fatal to the public prosperity \*. Both the manufacturer and the merchant, whose speculations are supported by that *credit* which springs from confidence alone, are obliged to *restrain* their industry in proportion to the diminution of their pecuniary powers," &c.

The least reflection on circulation in general, or on the once flourishing trade of France, will convince us that the bulk of her transactions, both abroad and at home, were conducted by means of *credit*, and that promises to pay, or bills of exchange drawn at a certain date, had become a new circulating medium, the amount of which far exceeded the specie in the country. Bailleul estimated the joint amount of the specie, credit, and other circulating capitals, as forming mediums of exchange under the old government of *thirteen milliards* (520 millions sterling). It is much to be lamented that this financier has not stated the data whence he made this calculation ; but even

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\* These consequences are rendered more and more *fatal* to the national revenue, not only because it affects all its purchases, on account of the inability to pay ready money, but because the collectors of taxes conceal their receipts as long as possible, in order to employ them at exorbitant interest. Of this the minister of finance is continually complaining, and threatening them with punishment ; but all his menaces are in vain while the bait to elude his vigilance is so powerful.

supposing it exaggerated, still it is certain that *credit*, which is the principal, though artificial, source of all pecuniary transactions in France, has been dried up in proportion as the general distrust has increased its repulsive force. This is another consequence of the assignats, and of the dread of seeing some new paper circulation suddenly substituted in their place, by means of which the government will pay their contractors, by authorizing them to pay their creditors in the same manner. This is the principal cause of usury in France; and of this her leaders are so well aware, that, to justify their bankruptcy towards the holders of mandates, the minister of the interior alleged, that the *successive forced circulations of paper had obliged the home trade to deal only FOR READY MONEY*. The minister, however, was misinformed; for I know there are several foreign merchants who still give a credit of two, three, and sometimes of six months to their correspondents in France. It is true, they only grant this favour to the few whose good faith has already been tried during the reign of paper, and it is equally true that several of the inhabitants of France have passed through this ordeal with honour: but we may conjecture, without exaggeration, that the credit granted them on their purchases abroad, is in general only a fifth of the time allowed them before the revolution. From this source the following effects have flowed:—As the Lyons merchant formerly bought his silk at fifteen months credit, and sold his manufactures at a year's credit, he might, with a very moderate capital, carry on a very considerable trade. But now every thing is changed: and

though he can scarcely obtain three months indulgence, yet he cannot offer his goods for sale in a foreign market without giving the same credit as his competitors. How then can we wonder that the grower of silk in the south of France no longer finds purchasers or manufacturers for his produce?

The foreign trade of every country bears but a small proportion to the transactions of its internal commerce. No doubt its state and progress well deserve our minutest attention, though rather as a symptom than as a mean of prosperity. And although it is often at once the cause and effect of riches, the most desirable circumstance attending its progress is not perhaps so much the balance received by the commercial nation, as the certainty it gives them of supplying their own wants, which depends on the quantity exported, while the number of domestic consumers keeps pace with that of their foreign purchasers. The English, for example, consume infinitely more of their own woollen manufacture, since their exportations have been doubled or trebled\*. This truth cannot be too strenuously enforced; and every

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\* The average amount of their exports in this branch, during the three first years of the present century, was 2,477,520*l.* sterling, whereas for the three last years it has been 5,079,813*l.* sterling. Now as these estimates are formed from the custom-house books on the old scale of prices, established a century ago, although it ought to be fifty *per cent.* more, and considering the improvement in the qualities, and the increased prices of cloth, we have every reason to believe that the English now export woollens to four times the amount exported at the commencement of the present century, and to nearly three times the amount of the silks exported by France during the highest prosperity of the trade of Lyons. It appears by the convoy duty, that the exportation of woollens from England amounts to nine millions sterling.

It is to be observed, that woollen manufactures are among those

enlightened prince should consider it as his principal object, in inspecting his custom-house accounts, to judge by those invaluable documents whether both the productive labour and the consumption of his subjects are increased, diminished, or continue stationary.

It is in this point of view that we ought to apply these remarks to republican France; for if, as will hereafter appear, her foreign trade has been reduced to less than half its former amount, it is highly probable that the classes of her inhabitants, who are in easy circumstances, do not now consume one half the clothes or the furniture they purchased before the revolution. If they have lost two thirds of their former income, they must surely deprive themselves of as great a proportion of their former enjoyments. The comparison of the people of Poland with France, or of Ireland with England, has long exhibited a full demonstration of this truth.

I do not, however, mean to infer, that the French are as yet arrived at a state of misery similar to that of Poland; for it is evident they can supply the bulk of their own consumption of coarse clothing: but as the amount of the exchanges to which this consumption gives birth is far more considerable than those of foreign commerce, it follows that it is principally in their domestic transactions that the republic must experience the disastrous effects of the annihilation of

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which have made the least rapid progress in England, and it is surprising that they have not been more materially retarded by that of cotton goods, as there are perhaps a hundred times as many of the latter manufactured in England now as a century ago.

credit; and hence I infer, that even had these domestic transactions only been reduced to one half, it is highly probable they would require a much larger circulation of specie than formerly.

Of this we have a proof in the increasing lamentations of the French concerning the scarcity of money, notwithstanding all the silver of the churches, and the immense quantity of plate belonging to individuals, which has been carried to the mint, and was destined to replace the specie sent abroad, or buried and concealed. Yet they are continually deploring, more and more, the disappearance of the specie, while they ought rather to lament the total destruction of credit. Let them, for instance, turn their attention for a moment towards Great Britain, the good sense of whose inhabitants has convinced them, that as the precious metals are a mere dead stock, it is enough if they have a sufficient quantity of them for the settlement of accounts, since they can double that quantity, whenever it is necessary, by means of bank notes, which perform all the functions of specie, without the inconvenience and loss attending a dead capital in money. It is certain, however, that with a circulating medium, whether in specie or in paper, not exceeding half what is possessed by France, that nation transacts business to an infinitely greater amount. To what then can we attribute this surprising fact? Doubtless to the effects of *credit*; while credit itself arises from security, security from liberty, and lastly, liberty from respect for the LAWS; to which every class of men in England either voluntarily bow, or are compelled to submit.

It is the instability, oppression, and severity of the laws, and the contempt of the people for their authority, that have for some years past annihilated credit in France : and the commercial deputies, when they declared, that *the growing habit of hoarding money precluded all possibility of borrowing*, were very careful to add, that *this state of affairs was the result of a vast number of laws which violated property, overturned credit, and followed each other with a most alarming rapidity*.

I shall presently describe other causes of the annihilation of credit ; but we will begin by pointing out one of the most disastrous of its consequences. I mean, that the retail prices of goods have, by degrees, risen to near twice the price that is paid for them to the wholesale dealer. Nor can we wonder at this when the manufacturer can only obtain a very short indulgence on his raw materials, and therefore cannot grant a longer time to the shopkeeper. Hence the retail dealer is obliged to add to his accustomed profits the interest of the money he advances : an addition which must necessarily be exorbitant on account of the enormous interest paid for money ; for if the goods remain a year in his warehouse, this delay would expose him to a loss of a quarter or even one third of their value\*.

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\* The retail dealer is almost certain of a daily sale, and only stocks his shop in proportion to the demands of his customers, to whom he gives the law, obliging them to reimburse him for the interest of his money, the expenses of his licence (*patente*), and the amount of his personal and mobiliary tax.

But the situation of the wholesale dealer is very different. If he ventures to make a speculation, and cannot wait till the market is favourable, he is very frequently obliged to sell his goods at a confi-



Another and a most deplorable consequence of the destruction of credit is, that no-one will keep a well-stocked warehouse, the manufacturers only making just as much as will supply their actual orders, and never venturing to accumulate their stock, though that accumulation is the true criterion and measure of the prosperity of every nation.

If we may listen to the legislator Craffous, and the majority of his colleagues, the usurious interest of which they complain arises from no other cause than the *scarcity* of money. This, no doubt, has a considerable effect; but Mr. Hume has fully proved that the interest of money does not so much depend on its scarcity, as on the profit that can be derived from other modes of employing it, and that this profit is always considerably higher in countries where the useful arts are in their infancy, or where they are declining. It is remarkable that this acute writer should have omitted the principal cause of the increased rate of interest, which is the risk of the lenders, and their want of confidence in the laws which sanction and secure their transactions. But the commercial deputies having paid dearly for their experience, supplied that omission, and complained most loudly of the instability of the laws, which have incessantly alarmed the money-lender with chances of loss hitherto unknown. "These hazards," say they, "authorize

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derable loss, or at least without profit, that he may not sacrifice the exorbitant interest he might otherwise receive on his capital, or that he may derive a more considerable profit from some other speculation. In a word, he is either poorer in proportion, or more pressed for money, than the retail dealer; and thus is the great difference between the wholesale and retail prices to be likewise attributed to usury.

him in compensating his losses by demanding a still higher interest, which must augment in proportion to the danger, till at length the risk of loss increasing beyond all the calculations of human foresight, no other remedy could be found to such flagrant *depravity* than a spirit of *hoarding*, which will turn a deaf ear to every borrower."

It was in speaking of the *scandalous practice* of paper circulation, that the commercial deputies thus expressed themselves, acknowledging "that it had substituted dishonesty in the place of good faith, made vice triumph over virtue, and introduced into every class of society the most unbridled *corruption*, and the most disgusting *depravity* \*."

\* Such will ever be the effects of a paper circulation issued by the government, especially should the law constitute it a legal payment, and authorize the discharge of debts in a medium whose value is inferior to the true amount of the debts contracted. No Frenchman has been so energetic as the celebrated Brissot, in reproaching the inhabitants of the United States of America with having forfeited that character of strict probity and honour which once belonged to them. Had he taken the pains to trace this degeneracy to its true source, the vestiges of which unfortunately still continue, and will endure for a very long time yet to come, he would have found it in the circulation of paper, as well by each separate State as by the Congress. Thus, perhaps, he might have been able to preserve his countrymen from splitting on the same rock; for had he referred to the History of that country published by Ramsay, he would have found the following passage:

"The evils of depreciation did not terminate with the war; they extend to the present hour. That the helpless part of the community were deprived of their property, was among the lesser evils which resulted from the legal tender of the depreciated bills of credit. The iniquity of the laws estranged the minds of many of the citizens from the habits of love and justice.

"The nature of obligations was so far changed, that he was reckoned the honestest man, who, from principle, delayed to pay his debts. The mounds which government had erected to secure the observance of honesty in the commercial intercourse of man with man, were broken down; truth, honour, and justice were swept away

It is a melancholy fact, that this *depravity* has of late made a considerable progress among the majority of men engaged in trade in France. "Trade," said Roffée, on the 14th March 1798, "is in the hands of such *unprincipled* men, that it is impossible to be too cautious of falling into their hands."—"One *throne* is *subverted*," added Gauthier, a few days after; "but another throne remains to be destroyed: I mean that on which *depravity* has taken her seat. On every side we are surrounded by corruption, and its mighty torrent bursts through every obstacle. If a change of system is not speedily adopted, it will swallow up the whole rising generation."

On the very day when this deputy thus attempted to alarm the Council of Five Hundred, Harmand declared in the Council of Elders, that he could not discover any other means of putting a stop to the increasing depravity of the commercial classes, than to imitate those who had sitten upon the *throne* which was now *subverted*. He instanced the edict of Henry IV. in 1609. "It is easy to perceive," said he, "that in those times, as in our own, political troubles had given birth to a great corruption of manners, and such an unbounded licentiousness, *especially in commerce*, that not only private families, but the state itself, was disordered; and that to put a stop to these disorders and crimes, it was necessary

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by the overflowing deluge of legal iniquity; nor have they yet assumed their ancient and accustomed seats."

We can scarcely read this passage without imagining that the commercial deputies had it before them when they drew up their report.

to have recourse to severe penalties against *fraudulent bankruptcies*."

Arrests for debt, which the economists had also succeeded in abolishing, at the same time with the *lead seals*, were now restored without any farther deliberation. This was doubtless indispensably necessary to the restoration of confidence in commercial transactions : but by some unaccountable fatality, the present legislators of France are never successful but in destroying, nor do they ever think of correcting an evil till the remedy is worse than the disease. Can we, for instance, imagine a more scandalous violation of justice, than to attempt putting a stop to individual *improbability*, by re-establishing imprisonment for debt, at a time when the government itself is in a state of undisguised bankruptcy, towards every Frenchman who has contracted any debts ? Can we conceive a greater degree of *improbability* than to cause men to be dragged to prison for paying their creditors in the very paper (the *bons*) in which the state is paying the annuities and dividends, after having *liquidated*, that is to say, reduced the latter to one third ?

The deputy who passes for the most experienced merchant of the two Councils, has fully proved the extreme injustice of re-establishing *personal arrests* at an æra when the government adopts this method of discharging its debts. He represented that "almost every individual citizen was a sufferer by that national bankruptcy called *liquidation*. Where is the man," said he, "who is not either directly or indirectly a creditor of the republic ? Where is the man who is

not either thus paid off, or the creditor of some one who is? What then will be the fate of this enormous mass of citizens who are thus interested in the liquidation of the national debt? And yet you have decreed the re-establishment of personal arrests, which must inevitably affect a large number who will be unable, with all their exertions, to pay their debts, so long as the present depreciation of real estates and of the public stocks shall continue." Here the orator recapitulated all that the law requires of a French citizen—"if he is a stockholder," continued he, "in proportion to the liquidation of his claim, without a security for the payment of the interest allowed him on the reduced capital; if he is a *debtor*, in proportion to his engagements before and during the period of the paper circulation; if he is in trade, in proportion to his liberty which is thus compromised; if he is *liable to taxes*, in proportion to his apparent fortune, which may rather be called a *nominal fortune*; if he is a landholder, in proportion to the depreciation of land, which has been the necessary consequence of the depreciation of paper"—and he concluded this recapitulation as follows: "By the execution and the non-execution of your laws and orders, you at one and the same time act and do not act; you order, you demand, you reduce the interest, you impose taxes, you send forth garnishers, you *imprison for debt*, you liquidate and liquidate again, and yet pay nothing."

Thus on the 5th April 1798 spoke Lecouteulx, who would doubtless have been less alarmed, had the only question been the decree which authorizes im-

*prisonment for debt*; for the number of insolvent debtors is so great, that it is impossible the judges should attempt to put the law in force; since all the prisons in France would not be sufficient to contain them.

The speech of this deputy renders it unnecessary to make any additional observations on the impossibility of the French government restoring *probity* in pecuniary engagements, as long as it shall be unable to pay those of the nation, or on the impossibility of reducing the interest of money, till this species of improbity, which has made commerce little better than highway robbery, shall be quashed.

It cannot be too often repeated, that the *ASSIGNATS* were the real source of this evil. What Dupont very justly calls the depraving or *immoralizing* shocks \* of the revolution, are also the combined effect of a multitude of laws which seem calculated to draw upon the French nation every thing that would corrupt them, or rob them of their natural frankness, disinterestedness, and confidence. Thus, for example; in order to efface the impression of the late king from the coin, they have converted the church bells into a new republican coin, which does not contain one third of its nominal value. Such frauds may indeed, for a time, deceive the common people, but they are discovered sooner or later, and at length are almost always magnified beyond the truth. In France, the Jacobins themselves, both at Paris and in the departments, universally give the preference to the old coin

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\* Secousses démoralisantes.

of one and two sous pieces, although they contain less metal than those of the republic. Hence the government have lately determined to call in all the copper coin, old or new ; and as they engage not to put them again into circulation, they can only employ them for cannon until the period shall arrive when these may again be converted into bells.

This base coin may explain the rise in the price of labour, of which we shall presently have occasion to speak. In fact, if the copper money, with which the labourer is either partly or wholly paid, is not intrinsically worth more than four tenths of its nominal value, it is evident they must be compensated by an augmentation of their wages of at least four or five tenths. But it is by no means equally apparent that the calling in this base money will be sufficient to restore the price of labour to its ancient standard.

As the government, in calling in this coin, engages to receive it in payment of the taxes and contributions, and will thereby suffer a loss of forty-four millions of livres, they have recurred to the expedient of compensating that sacrifice out of the silver coin, by substituting the name of *franc* to that of *livre*, and ordering that these shall be equal to one livre and three deniers tournois, so that the old écu of six livres is now worth only five livres and ninety centimes, or five livres eighteen sous.

The pretext of this singular decree was to favour the decimal mode of calculation : but the real object was an imperceptible augmentation of one and three quarters *per cent.* on all the taxes, by demanding payment of them in francs. It may, however, turn out

that the government will fall into their own snare; for while enforcing the adoption of this new regulation, they must necessarily conform to it themselves in dealing with the contractors, and the persons they employ; and as their expenditure is four or five times as much as their receipts, they will in the end lose three or four times as much by this imposition as they expected to gain by it.

A still greater evil attends this regulation of the coin: I mean the illicit profits derived from it by the jobbers (*agioteurs*), who are able to follow all its changes, and thus to lay a snare for those who have been simple enough to believe, that contracting a debt for 600 livres was the same as binding themselves in the sum of 100 crowns. It is said that similar impositions have at length put the greater number on their guard: and it must be confessed that nothing could be more necessary, since every piece of silver coin they pass exposes them to a lawsuit, unless they make a previous agreement, whether to pay and receive in *livres* or in *francs*, and whether the odd money shall be paid in copper. As this bargaining is still more complex with regard to gold, it is already under discussion of the legislative body to abandon it to its intrinsic value, and to demonetize or quash the louis, as they have done with regard to the assignats and mandats, leaving every one to make his own bargain according to the market price. Though this measure will be equally disastrous with the former, we shall hereafter show that it is become almost indispensably necessary.

But this is not all. While the legislators of France



have thus confounded the nominal and intrinsic value of the coins ; while they have attempted to substitute for the écu of six livres with the king's head, a new écu of five livres with the figure of the republic, containing a much greater proportion of alloy than the old silver coin \* ; they have also determined to change all the *weights* used in traffic, and to substitute the new measure called *metre* in the place of the *ell*.

As the former is one fifth less than the latter, most of the hawkers and pedlars, and the lesser shopkeepers, have eagerly adopted it ; and without considering themselves obliged to declare the difference to the purchaser, delivered five or ten *metres*, while the buyer imagined he had received an equal number of *ells* ; whereas, on examining his purchase, he found he had only four or eight. It is unnecessary to add, that in the innumerable appeals which have arisen from these impositions, the judges have always decided according to the decree which orders all good citizens to use only the *republican measures*. In this respect, instances of cheating have occurred which will one day amuse the world, by furnishing many a scene for dramatic exhibition. But however striking these may be, or however applicable to my subject, I cannot prevail on myself thus to embellish the melancholy picture of the depravity of a whole nation.

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\* Of this Villers complained with much severity on the 14th October 1796 : " In no country," said he, " has that great maxim of political economy, *not to touch the coin*, been less adhered to than in France, *especially since the revolution*. Doubtless it was right to banish the marks of slavery, and to substitute those of liberty in their place ; but good policy, as well as the interests of commerce, *perhaps* required that the *standard* should have been preserved."

I shall conclude this subject of the new measures; the adoption of which has been hurried on by every possible means\*, with observing that it has contributed, perhaps more than can be imagined, to the increase of price of the French manufactures. Although the quantity is thus diminished, both in length and breadth, they have continued at their former prices for the same reasons that prevented the price of labour from falling to its original rate, when the assignats gave place to specie. The Directory, it is true, have been the first victim in consequence of the contracts for the armies; and it is perhaps for this reason that they are so desirous to have their *metres* and their *grammes* adopted by the neutral powers, for which purpose they have proposed to them a congress of learned men.

What we have now said of the progress of bad faith will perhaps point out the last, and perhaps the principal cause of usury; I mean, that at Paris, lending money is become a mere *game of hazard*, of which the chances are incalculable, since there are very few bor-

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\*. The following is an extract from the report on this subject, which was presented by Daubermesnil on the 24th September 1798: "Our new measures cannot meet with any obstacles except from old prejudices, or the idleness of individuals. It is of the utmost importance to put a stop to this struggle between the routine of habit and the dictates of reason; between imposition and probity; between the *ell* and the *metre*. Let us accelerate the period which will banish this variety of measures, this last remnant of the feudal system. Like the new calendar (*l'anuaire*), it is a *republican institution*, and we ought to favour them all, because they have all the same object. That of the new weights and measures is to establish order and good faith in all transactions."

This *republican institution* the kings of Prussia, of Denmark, and the Grand Duke of Tuscany, are strongly solicited by the French Directory to introduce in their dominions.

rowers who are not government contractors, or under-contractors to these. Some houses of trade, however, have persisted in refusing every kind of transaction with these two classes of gamblers; and these are the houses which have been able to discount their paper at three quarters *per cent. per month*, while others cannot get theirs discounted for less than two or three *per cent.* This the writer mentioned (page 181) has not dared to say, though he undertook to explain the reason of this difference.

Nor can we be surprised at this difference, when we reflect that these contractors have already been fraudulently paid in 1797 in *inscriptions*, and the year before in *mandats*. In order to compensate therefore the increasing risks which they incur in this lottery, the government has been obliged more and more, to augment the number of high prizes; and the bait of this immense advantage leads the contractors, in their turn, to offer a proportionate interest for the money they borrow, or for the hazardous credits they enjoy. It therefore appears that the legislative body, who from time to time loudly complain of the increasing progress of *bad faith*, of *usury*, and of the *oppressive conditions* imposed by the contractors, should take all the blame to themselves; they should attribute it to the frequent bankruptcies they have successively permitted or sanctioned, and those innumerable retrospective laws, which keep every man of property in a state of fear and alarm.

However easy it may be to discover the true causes of usury, it is proportionately difficult to calculate at what period, and by what train of circumstances, the

interest of money will be restored to its former rate. In every other country, perhaps, it would be more easy than in France : but how could this be effected among a nation so dissimilar from every other, and especially in their ideas on matters of finance ? Have we not already twice, within the space of a century, seen the inhabitants of France exchanging their gold and other property, for leaves of paper, like those of old, at the Sibyl's cave, which could not bear a breath of wind without losing their magic value. Her prophecies, no doubt, will not again be so readily believed, till the memory of the assignats is totally obliterated and extinct. But that period will arrive sooner or later ; and then, should another *Law* appear with a plan of paper circulation, which shall unite the charms of novelty with the attractions of profitable speculation, and the magic of unintelligible mystery ; should he be able to give it an air of magnificence, by promising its votaries a *colossal fortune* ; should he be able to find a number of monied men, whose imaginations he can warm with the splendour of his *system*, and who will preach it up and adopt it, we may be certain it would become a new and powerful talisman to the French nation, that they will again pursue the golden dream of raising a *colossal fortune*, and that they will at length awaken with astonishment at having been a third time duped by a new adventurer, though equally ready to fall into the snare of a fourth. If it were not too rash to attempt to judge of such a nation by the experience of others, or to calculate the future vicissitudes of rise and fall in the rate of interest, I should imagine it possible to point out various mea-

tures which, being jointly adopted, might contribute to reduce it in a short time to its old standard, even should the specie in circulation have experienced a diminution of more than half. But the period is not yet arrived for mentioning them ; for the two primary steps are the restoration of the lawful heir to the throne, and the restitution of the confiscated lands. It is sufficient to have proved that the scarcity of money is by no means a principal cause of exorbitant and usurious interest \*.

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\* Bailleul is, however, the first who seems to have made the discovery. " At present," said he, on the 8th August, " the ordinary taxes are increased to the same rate as before the revolution, and credit is annihilated. *Every thing is now paid for in ready money.* Business is therefore transacted with difficulty. Receipts are slow. The public service is impeded. The markets are heavy. And what is the cause of all these evils? 'Tis the destruction of CREDIT. Confidence is a species of tallman which multiplies both resources and capitals, unites all the citizens in the most powerful bonds, is the support of governments when they are distressed, and renders all their powers effectual and productive. It is *public credit* that we ought to apply ourselves to create and revive among us. Let us then confine ourselves to one object, the great and important object of *re-establishing credit*. Let these words be engraved on the walls of this hall, and in the heart of every member."

These are grand truths, though they are not new discoveries : he should however have had the courage to utter them on the 30th September 1797, when the republic gave the death-blow to her own credit by the celebrated decree of *bankruptcy*. However extraordinary that decree may itself appear, the principles by which it was justified are far more surprising, and will become a striking feature in the history of the Great Nation. But what is still more remarkable in this speech is, that it was delivered by the ferocious Bailleul, the most strenuous partisan of the war, and that none of his opponents replied by observing, that the *re-establishment of credit* depended entirely on the reduction of the expenditure within the limits of the revenue ; that if this reduction were possible, it could only take place in consequence of the return of peace, and that this auspicious word ought to be engraved in the halls of the two Councils. It is in the directorial journal *above* that we now and then meet with this word *peace*, though it is never employed but to show that its return depends solely on the liberality with which the subsidies demanded by the government are granted by the Councils, and to prove that *the key which opens the national treasury is the same that will shut the temple of Janus*.

These observations on the exorbitant rate of interest afford a clue to that of the manufactures of France. But their increase of price, both retail and wholesale, is still further accounted for by the second of the causes enumerated above; I mean the rise of wages in the towns of France, where, Portes assures us, they have been *doubled on every species of labour*.

In fact, the price of wages has only been increased 50 per cent. His exaggeration, however, is by no means surprising in the midst of a revolutionary vortex, which has confounded every thing with so much rapidity, that it is almost impossible to take a survey of its perpetually shifting scenery. Who could have expected this change from a perusal of the statement published three years since by Saint-Aubin? whereby it appeared, that the wages of most of the workmen in the towns were then only half as much as before the existence of the paper circulation. From what causes then can they have been quadrupled, or, at least, tripled within so short a period? And yet of such an increase the same author now complains, in a work which forms a striking contrast with the former. When he is there endeavouring to account for the high price of wine, he attributes it to the sudden increase of the consumption by workmen and labourers, when, *in lieu of fifteen or twenty sous per day, which they could hardly make, towards the extinction of the assignats, they were suddenly paid two and even three livres per day as soon as specie reappeared.*

This fact, which is in itself of the highest importance, is still further confirmed, though with less precision, by a subsequent report; in which Lecou-

teulx informs us, that the wages of servants have risen *so much, that no one will now engage more than are absolutely necessary for the business of the family.* Hence, therefore, it appears incontrovertibly evident, that a general and a considerable augmentation has taken place in the price of wages; nor would this increase be by any means so great an evil as is imagined by some Frenchmen, were it but attributable to natural causes, or if it had given birth to any emulation among labourers and workmen. Unfortunately, the revolutionary system seems to have utterly eradicated the spirit of economy; an effect which must also be attributed to the operation of the assignats; for as no one could foresee how much he might lose within the next four and twenty hours, the surest mean of avoiding loss was to spend them as soon as they were received. Hence, as men learned no longer to depend on the stability of any thing, every one made a point of enjoying the fruits of his labour before he had time to be robbed of them: and a journal of respectability assures us, that “not only the working people in the towns *are much less industrious, and gain three times as much* as before the revolution; but that the high price of wages has given the lowest classes a facility of subsistence till then unknown, and which permits the artisan to gratify his old hankering after licentiousness and debauchery\*.”

This, however, is a still greater exaggeration than that of Portes; for the most accurate accounts do not state the increase of wages in the towns at more

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\* *Spéctateur du Nord* of February 1797.

than half. Every artisan who now receives three livres a day formerly received nearly two.

The reader will scarcely believe this rapid increase of wages possible, when he reflects on the still more rapid impoverishment of the class of men who employ journeymen. It is perfectly easy, however, to resolve this problem, if we consider that the inhabitants of the towns were the first who felt the ardour of martial achievements: this led them in crowds to the field during the first campaigns, which were by far the most destructive. And as in this interval no apprentices were taken \*, it is the less surprising

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\* The following is the report of Baraillon on the 17th November 1797, on the present deserted state of schools in France: "The youths who ought to have been under the tuition of the schools, have flown to the frontiers of the empire, where they have been successively followed by their younger brothers. Even those who were exempt from the requisition, in consideration of their tender years, were no less inflamed with the general enthusiasm and the *martial ardour*, for which the French nation are so eminently distinguished; and, instead of applying to study, devoted themselves to a military career. In every place the object that most universally struck the eye was that of youths, and even children, learning their exercise, and performing military evolutions. Their parents even encouraged this enthusiasm, and, instead of procuring instruction for them, only turned their attention to the arts of defence, or to exterminating the common enemy. The impulse being thus once communicated, its force continued and increased; and thus the central schools were almost deserted. Besides, the fathers of families being not only oppressed by requisitions of every kind, and impoverished by the unproductiveness of the harvests, but ruined by the paper circulation, and overwhelmed with exorbitant contributions, at a time when specie was extremely scarce, were hardly able to pay for any kind of instruction for their children; who being thus unaccustomed to study, even resisted the will of their parents."

If such was the effect of the *military enthusiasm* on the youth of France who were designed for the learned professions, what must have been its influence on the classes destined for handicraft trades, ever eager to prefer martial glory to obscure domestic industry and labour? And what motive could induce a parent to pay an apprentice-fee for his child, who, long before the expiration of his noviciate, would, in all probability, be put in requisition for the armies?



that the demand for journeymen bricklayers and masons for repairs should be so disproportioned to the number of those who have remained at home, that the price of their wages has considerably increased.

It is a certain fact, that the destruction of the men employed in the handicraft trades has been immense. We might even be led to estimate it at five sixths, if we deduced our calculation from the produce of the *licences*; which, notwithstanding the extreme rigour with which they have been exacted in the year vi. only amounted to seventeen millions; though Le Brun had estimated them at 120. It is, however, highly probable they would have produced that sum before the revolution, because this tax is very heavy and very comprehensive, extending to every handi-

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The same remark may also be applied to those designed for the learned professions. Incredible as it may appear, the new recruitments include all the young men who were destined to fill up the void of which Baraillon complained, when speaking of the *ravages* and *murders* committed by the empirics of the present day, who pretend to practise the healing art. At the instance of this deputy, the legislature voted a considerable sum for the immediate reorganization of the schools of health; but scarcely had these begun to resume their activity, when the decree of the conscription announced to the new pupils, that they must abandon their studies and march to join the armies. In consequence of this, the students of Strasburg presented a petition, in which they only asked for leave to continue their studies *till the levies of the military hospitals should call them to the posts they were to fill*. But the *Moniteur* of the 7th November 1798 states, that the Council continued inflexible, and passed to the order of the day without a single opposing voice to advocate their cause; not even Daubermesnil, who, six weeks before, had deplored the *desertion* of the new schools, declaring "that a great number of the officers of health, especially in the armies of the south, had fallen victims to that zeal which their country had a right to claim." A few days after the Strasburg petition was rejected, the Council of Five Hundred decreed, in answer to that of Hardy, that "the Directory may grant to the physicians graduated in foreign countries the right of exercising their profession within the territories of the republic."

craft trade, and to all those who exercise any branch of foreign or domestic commerce.

Another cause of the rise in the price of labour, and for which the French are also indebted to the enlightened views of the economists, is, the impossibility of restraining the *combinations* among workmen to give the law to their employers. For the legislative body, through respect for the declaration of the rights of man, has constantly passed to *the order of the day*, whenever the proprietors of the various manufactories have complained of the *exorbitant demands* of their workmen, and solicited for a *tarif* of wages. On the 13th June 1797, they rejected the petition of the cabinet-makers of Paris, declaring it was an attempt to restore the incorporated companies called *Jurandes & Maîtrises*, and persisted in adhering to what they called the *grand principes*, without regarding the observation of Vaublanc, that the police ought to keep a very *watchful eye over combinations*, which might ultimately prove so injurious to the general good.

Although this deputy only irritated his colleagues by citing the example of England, as a country that had *constantly practised these wise maxims*; and although some well-informed Englishmen entertain different opinions on this question of political economy, the Directory will very soon adopt that of Vaublanc, and proclaim it to be dictated by *wisdom*. For as the government suffers considerably by the increased price of labour, in consequence of the immense amount of the clothing and accoutrements for the armies, whenever they can venture to displease the

inhabitants of the *Faubourgs*, they will denounce these combinations as a bounty granted by France to the manufactures of England. If they will then appear justifiable in such an attempt, what must we think of the folly of those legislators, who, after having decreed the prohibition of British commodities, exclaim with astonishment and indignation, "that they still find their way into the republic, and are daily exchanged against its specie?"—"How happens it," Hellot gravely asked on the 11th August 1797, "that our *prohibitory laws*, which ought to banish our enemies from the important markets of France, are thus impudently *violated*?"

*How happens it?*—The question is simple and childish! How happens it, let me ask of this deputy and his party, that they dare to reproach the people with this *violation* of their *prohibitory laws*, when they have themselves incessantly endeavoured to complete the destruction of all the useful arts, and have constantly forced into the armies the few industrious hands that yet remained? What! they themselves proclaim the frauds practised in those manufactures which have been so fortunate as to escape the revolutionary hatchet, and are astonished that their decrees do not exclude British manufactures, which are not only of superior quality, but much lower in price! When we learn from their own mouths, that their manufactures find their way to Paris itself, notwithstanding the numerous armies that guard the coasts and frontiers\*; when we learn that the army

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\* Of this I shall adduce abundant proofs in the next chapter. The following very singular confession of Brulé, on the 31st May 1798,

clothiers clandestinely purchase whole cargoes of ordinary woollens in England for the armies of the republic, and even kerseymeres for the senatorial toga of the two Councils, if we have any cause for astonishment, it is, that the latter should flatter themselves, that when peace shall have again opened the channels of commerce, the manufactures of France will be able to maintain a competition with those which foreigners can sell at two thirds of the price, and yet gain a higher profit. No: France will never be able to maintain such a competition, and re-establish her richest manufactures, till she shall again have accumulated a productive capital, and replaced her dissipated treasures; or, at least, till the restoration of credit shall have reduced the interest of money to the same rate as in the manufacturing countries\*.

will here suffice. "Whenever a merchant, whether a citizen of the republic or a foreigner, wishes to transmit or import goods into France, he has two men to deal with on the frontiers: the first, who is the revenue officer, says to him, *You must give me fifty per cent. on your goods, or I will not suffer them to pass*; while another, who is the smuggler, says, *All I ask is ten per cent. and I will procure their admission*."

This deputy related the above as a *notorious fact*; and added, that the smuggling contractors calculated upon a *certainity* of introducing ninety-five parcels of goods out of a hundred.

\* Though Saint-Aubin so easily made up his mind on the vast increase of wages, he, with great reason, complains most loudly of the exorbitant interest of money; of which he has placed the effects in the strongest point of view by the following example: "A manufacturer of stockings can supply that article cheaper in England, where, by means of *machines* and superior industry, a workman who receives three livres per day makes *fifteen* pair of stockings in a week, and where the interest of money is only *6 per cent. per annum*, than in a country where the workman is paid only two livres per day, makes only *ten* pair in a week, and where, for want of credit, the manufacturer would be obliged to borrow a capital to carry on his business at the rate of *2 per cent. per month*."

It is true, that fewer obstacles impede the revival of their manufactories of furniture, trinkets, toys, and articles of fashion, which require but small capitals, and for which their refined taste and continual novelty secures a decided preference: but the *sceptre of fashion* which the Parisians have held during the two last centuries, and which their poets have so *proudly* celebrated \*, contributes but a very inconsiderable portion to the exportations of an extensive empire. Thus, while the manufacturers of Great Britain allowed France to enjoy the exclusive privilege of supplying a few articles of dress for women of fashion in the various courts of Europe, who place a high value on the embroidery of Lyons and the gauzes of Paris, they were employing themselves in improving and bringing to perfection their extensive manufactures of woollens, of cottons, and of leather, with which so many of the farmers of the north of Europe and America are clothed from head to foot. They very judiciously preferred applying themselves to such manufactures as are not subject to the caprices of fashion; and as Great Britain imports from her own colonies, or produces at home, most of the raw materials the

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\* The following passage is extracted from the writings of the Abbé Raynal, whom I shall take the liberty to rank with the poets whenever he abandons facts to enter into a display of *principles*: "It is by her manufactures and her *millinery* that France has *subjugated* Europe and some parts of the other hemisphere. *The nations are fascinated, and cannot shake off the yoke.*—The fertility of invention will ever outrun the promptitude of imitation, and the levity of a nation who *rejuvenate* every thing at home, and render every thing abroad *old-fashioned*, will elude the jealousy and foil the avidity of those who would attempt to counterfeit her productions." *Hist. Phil. & Pol.* vol. vii.

employs, the increase of these manufactures is a proof not only of the flourishing state of her industry, but also of her agriculture.

No one will deny, that one of the great errors of the old government of France was that of sacrificing agriculture to manufactures: and it is well known, that in order to encourage the latter, they procured, at a great expense, *models* of every machine that abbreviates and accelerates the processes of the arts. Their successors of the present day are constantly deploring that these models, of which Paris boasted the most magnificent collection in the universe, have been suffered, through gross neglect, to fall to decay. But in lieu of thus deploring the loss of their *models* as an irreparable loss \*, they should rather bewail the de-

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\*. The *models* that have escaped the early ravages of the revolution are rapidly falling to pieces, merely in consequence of the penury of the finances, which denies even the trifling expense requisite to stop their further decay. Grégoire observed, in a report made by him in May 1798, that "the sum necessary to keep up the *conservatory* of arts and manufactures would have been placed at very high interest in consequence of their influence on the national industry." He declared, that *for want of a building fit for their reception*, that immense accumulation of invaluable objects could not be kept in *repair*; insisted that a delay of three years had progressively become still more fatal, and solicited, but in vain, for the very moderate sum of 60,000 livres, *to remove all these chefs-d'œuvre from the repository, where they were ruined, owing to their being heaped one upon another.*

It is easy to conceive, that this fine collection of *models* may have suffered *for want of the necessary funds*, whether to bestow on them the requisite care, or to enable the artists to be admitted to view them: and the same will inevitably be the lot of the *chefs-d'œuvre* of the fine arts brought from Italy to Paris. But that the republican government should suffer a repository so important to the re-establishment of the arts to go to decay *for want of a proper building for their reception*, at a time when they put up to sale, at any price, the vast edifices they had confiscated within the walls of the capital; or that the minister of the interior, whose agents do not occupy less than *four or five thousand houses* in the various departments of the republic,

struction of the machines themselves, of which Rœderer declares an immense number have fallen to ruin, since the men who were able to work them have been forced into the armies.

It may be argued, perhaps, that those artisans who have survived the chance of war, will be stimulated by necessity to devote a larger portion of time and attention to their work; and that they will thus gradually supply, by their assiduity and perseverance, the want of machinery to shorten and diminish their labour. This additional industry and exertion are, no doubt, the only means of repairing what was destroyed at the time when the general cry was, *Perish the arts, and let equality prevail*. This was the motive of Echauffériaux's saying, *We have lost much during the revolution, and we have a great deal to create anew*. Such was the advice he gave his colleagues on the 18th May 1798, and we shall presently see what advantage they have derived from it.

Incredible as it may appear, they doubled the number of days on which the people were not allowed to work, and added the *décadi* as a new *day of rest*. The apparent object of this decree was to substitute the new republican *annuaire* to the old calendar; but the real, though concealed intention, was to extirpate the Christian religion, which institutes the seventh day as a day of rest and of divine worship; and hence the Directory have been long endeavouring to change the market-days, and fix them on Sundays.

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would not devote one of all these to the accommodation of the conservatories of trade and manufactures, is truly astonishing, and appears scarcely credible!

Génissieux could not succeed in sanctioning this measure as a law, without founding the alarm against those who persisted in preferring the precepts of their religion to the decrees of their representatives.—“ Every republican,” said he, “ must be shocked to observe the scandalous perverseness with which the trades-people display their wares for sale on *décadi* in the streets of Paris, while the shops seem to be hermetically sealed on Sundays. This very striking contrast shows a decided contempt for the law, and this *contempt* ought to be *severely punished*.” Thus spoke this legislator on the 6th June 1798, and of course obtained a decree condemning to fine and imprisonment those who resist the order to make the *décadi* a *day of rest*.

We may boldly venture to defy the oppressors of this nation to cause their *décadis* to triumph over Sunday, and their revolutionary orgies over the Christian rites and ceremonies. But should they attempt to compel men to rest only on the *tenth* day, these pretended friends of the poor may boast of having overturned one of the institutions most favourable to their interest; because, while it forbids working on the seventh day, it obliges their employers to pay them, for the six days labour, a sufficiency for their support during a whole week. Thus it is that these philanthropic legislators fulfil their promises to meliorate the condition of the poorer classes!

Fortunately, this additional violation of the dictates of humanity is not in their power. Of this they were so well aware, that as they dared not to render working on Sunday obligatory, they have



limited themselves to constituting it a species of crime to work on *décadi*. And as the Directory will rigorously enforce this decree, it is very probable that the *décadi* will be observed by constraint, especially in the great manufacturing towns, which are more immediately under the notice and vigilance of the police \*. But as labour is voluntary, and the majority

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\* One of these representatives of the people having proposed to declare the *décadi* the only *day of rest*, Lucian Buonaparte opposed this proposal as an *inquisitorial measure unexampled in history*.—"When I refer," said he, "to the codes of all the tyrants and usurpers that have successively oppressed mankind, I cannot find a single example of a similar violation of personal and individual liberty."—When his colleagues perceived that this youthful deputy was so scrupulous of adding this *law* to the *code* of their usurpations, they very artfully eluded his vigilance, by only proposing, that shopkeepers should be obliged to open their shops during fair and market days. Lucian Buonaparte did not immediately perceive that this was a concealed mode of obliging them to open their shops on Sundays: perhaps, too, he was not aware that the government had taken great pains to fix these fairs and markets on the days called in the decrees the *periodical days of the old calendar*. Thus amended, the decree was passed, though not till Lecointe had made the following observations: "Ask any man which is the first day of the week, and if he sees the shops shut up, he will tell you immediately that it is evidently Sunday. We ought, therefore, to act towards the towns as interest has led men to act in the country, even in those parts where fanaticism has exercised her most cruel ravages. From those very country places I am just arrived; and even there the market-days being fixed on Sundays, have caused their ancient solemnities to be neglected." This deputy, however, seemed to have forgotten, that a few days before his colleague Bonnaire had agreed, that the *supplies of the markets had been prejudiced* by thus fixing the market-days on Sundays, and that the *people murmured at it*. But the Council of Five Hundred pretended to be the dupes of the above described imposture of Lecointe, and relented so far as to pass to the order of the day on the motions of several members, who proposed that licences should be granted only to those who took an oath to keep their shops open on Sundays; or, at least, that those who shut them up should be deemed to have *left off* business.

The commune of Ciotat presented a petition, wherein they proposed, "that those who made other days of rest besides *décadi*, should be placed in the class of the *rich*, and should pay double taxes, to be applied to the relief of the poor."

of the laborious classes are scrupulously attached to the principles of their religion, we may be confident they will celebrate the *décadi* to avoid punishment, and *Sunday* to satisfy their consciences. Such is the strange and unaccountable mode adopted for reducing the price of wages, *repairing* the destruction of machines used in manufactures, and *creating a great deal anew*, by punishing industry with fines, and enacting, that the whole French nation shall remain idle thirty-six or forty days more than their rivals, whom they exhort their countrymen to *excel in industry, as they surpass them in military glory and political liberty* \*!

Scarcely had the two Councils passed this decree, when the minister of the interior addressed an ostensible dispatch to his commissaries, complaining that

Similar petitions had already been presented before the revolution of the 18th Fructidor; but one of the members of the party of the moderates opposed them, and caused them to be rejected, crying out, *Let us not dishonour the décadi, by making it a day of IDLENESS; but, on the contrary, let us honour it by rendering it COMMERCIAL.*

We may judge how far the temper of the times is changed, by casting our eyes over an order of the administration of the department of Cher, which, to keep pace with the legislators who have succeeded Pichegru, lately PROHIBITED the farmers from publicly pursuing their work on the days appointed by law for days of rest. And although they have transferred to the municipal officers the power of granting dispensations which formerly resided in the curates, they recommend to them "to grant these only for a single day, and when they are assured that the petitioners have not suspended their labours on certain days of the decade destined to the *feasts of any religion whatsoever.*" Thus we perceive, that under pretext of rendering all their republican institutions co-ordinate, the legislative body, the Directory, and their commissaries in the departments, have gradually prohibited labour even to farmers; and introduced in the code of the Great Nation the very prohibition which L. Buonaparte could not find in the codes of all the tyrants and usurpers that have successively oppressed mankind.

\* See Laussat's speech.

*a great number of hands were idle, and intimating that they ought to be employed.*

This confession, from such a quarter, is the more remarkable, as a few weeks before he had erected a *temple to Industry* \* at Paris, at the opening of which he had himself officiated, and declared to those who were present, “ that *industry had acquired new energy; that France was covered with the effects of its exertions; that it had vanquished every obstacle; and that the sacred fire of emulation had constantly increased the sphere of its activity.*—Reckon up,” said he, “ the *innumerable manufactories* that have sprung up in the midst of storms, and even where great prospects of success were not held out, and be convinced that the *RICHES* of the people are a necessary consequence of the establishment of *LIBERTY!*”

It is observable, that literary vanity induced this statesman to insert in all the daily papers this eloquent invitation to his countrymen to reckon up their innumerable manufactories. It is also observable, that these very journals had already anticipated his invitation, and published the enumeration which he thus ventured to provoke: “ out of *eighteen thousand*

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\* This temple, which is open on every side, says the account of it, is designed for the exhibition of *models* of French industry. This exhibition is to be held every year on the festival of the foundation of the republic; and the models are to be examined by a *jury*, who will decide *whether they are calculated to do honour to the national industry of France.* This jury has already entered on its office, and their first act was to announce to France, *that the time is arrived when she will be emancipated from her servitude to the industry of her neighbours, and that throughout the empire the arts go hand in hand with the sciences, and are bursting from that shameful routine which is the characteristic of slavery, &c.*

looms formerly kept at work at Lyons in 1788, we can now scarcely reckon *three thousand* \*."

It is further observable, that the same journals in which the minister caused this inauguration speech to be inserted, contained a very circumstantial report of the Deputy Aubert on the same subject, in which we find the following sentence: "Our manufactures have experienced shocks, the effects of which have been sensibly felt by the agriculture even of the provinces in the neighbourhood of which they were situated."

Lastly, it is observable, that this ministerial quack sent a circular letter to the departmental administrations, in which he represents industry, commerce, and manufactures, as the real sources of public prosperity. He expressly charges them to *investigate the causes of their stagnation*, and recommends them to "make the people perceive in what high estimation agriculture is held by the French, since it is distinguished by a *national feast*. You will take this," said he, "for your *text*, to prove the great *difference*, in this respect, between the advantages of a republican and a monarchical government †."

\* *Clef du Cabinet*, No. 556.

† See the Supplement to the *Moniteur* of the 11th October 1798, No. 20. See also that of the 2d October, containing another dispatch, addressed to the departments by the same François de Neufchâteau, at the time when information arrived in France, that the Americans, provoked by the depredations committed on their trade, by the *indemnities*, the *recantations*, the *loans*, and the *douceurs*, which the republican Talleyrand demanded from their ambassadors of peace, had declared themselves *exonerated* from the *treaty of commerce* of 1778. It is well known, that by this treaty the merchants of France enjoyed many peculiar and exclusive advantages. To console them for these losses, the colleague of that minister addressed them

As these two papers, which may be considered as official, were cotemporary with the law of conscription, which tore from the farmers and handicraft tradesmen *their only sons*, whether their terms of apprenticeship were expired or not, they were truly worthy to be ranked among the numerous decrees by which the present legislators of France seem to have undertaken the task of preventing the revival of productive labour, and completing the ruin of those few manufactures that have escaped the eruptions of the revolutionary volcano.

The discussion I have here entered into may, perhaps, to some readers appear tedious; but the importance of the subject required a minute attention to all its circumstances. If we take the trouble to compare what has been said with the chapter wherein M. Necker has proved, by authentic documents, that even at the period when the manufactures of France were in their most flourishing state, the whole amount of her exports, whether in manufactured goods, or the produce of her own soil (exclusive of that of her colonies), was not sufficient to balance the value of her imports; if we recollect that M. Necker computed this deficit at five millions of livres, Echassériaux at seventeen, and Perrée at thirty, we shall readily perceive, what a labyrinth of difficulties

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to the following effect: " Soon will new treaties of commerce with other allied powers open new markets to our commodities; soon will those commodities be conveyed with increasing facility on roads and canals, which will be *repaired* or *opened* successively between every part of the territory of France." Such is the effrontery of the men into whose power the revolution has precipitated that unfortunate nation! such are the successors of the worthy Maletherbes, whom it has led to the scaffold!

the French are about to incur, to supply the void occasioned by the annihilation of their manufactures, and pay for the raw materials which are to them indispensably necessary. Nor can I discover that they have any other prospect before them, than that of a long series of impoverishment, which will at length reduce them, by the privations to which it will unavoidably expose them, to supply the whole of their home consumption themselves. But till that period arrive, how can we explain the assertion of their governors, who have dared to declare to all France, that *her resources are entire*, while these very men have, by means of their paper-circulation, their maximum, and their requisitions, devoured by the war, and for the war, all the capitals over which they have been able to extend their rapacious hands, and have seized and dissipated, in rapid succession, all those they could discover, from the diamonds of the crown to the endowments of hospitals—from the church-plate to the iron of the railings, and even the leaden coffins of the dead!

## CHAPTER VI.

*Of the present State of Commerce in France.*

WE are now to treat of the foreign trade carried on by France, in exchanging that part of her own commodities which she can spare for those of other countries of which she stands in need. We have already seen, that before the revolution the French had not only enough to pay for these imports, but that they received an annual balance of seventy millions, which they derived entirely from their colonial produce. We have seen, that by the custom-house books of 1787 it appears, that at that period of unparalleled prosperity; exclusive of their colonial commodities, the importations of European France amounted to 230 millions, and her exports to only 200. The Deputy Perrée, when quoting these books before the Council of Five Hundred, added, “ that they *evidently proved*, that it was merely the produce of the colonies that had so strongly inclined the balance of trade in favour of France \*.”

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\* His report may be seen in the *Moniteur* of the 12th February 1797; and in that of the 17th April following we see, that the very man who had thus *evidently proved* the above position, boldly ascended the tribune to pronounce the following prophecy: “ Commerce already looks forward to the time when France shall be the magazine, the manufactory, and the *emporium* of the world. Her *generosity* and *fidelity* to her treaties of commerce and of peace, will attach to her those nations who had already yielded their admiration to her

When we consider the present state of the remaining colonies, and the impossibility of cultivating with success those which England may consent to restore to France, all that she can expect, for some years after this restitution, is, to receive enough produce from the colonies to supply her home consumption. But as the exchange of her other commodities formerly left her an annual debt of some millions, it remains to be considered how much this unfavourable balance must have increased since the manufacturers have been totally ruined, who annually exported to the amount of 150 millions in silks, cambrics, lawns, cloths, serges, camlets, druggets, galloons, embroideries, laces, stockings, hats, gloves, fans, millinery, books, tapestry, watches, jewels, plate-glass, rich furniture \*, &c.

It will no doubt be said, that if France is obliged to purchase of other nations a part of those articles of clothing with which she formerly supplied them, her importation of the raw materials she used to take from them will now proportionably diminish; that she will now have no occasion to purchase their silks, of which her imports formerly amounted to twenty-seven millions annually; and that she will act as a nation of limited resources, and revive her manu-

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victories." A few months before this, Citizen Fontanes, when opening the central schools of the department of Paris, had promised to the new republic "every species of *glory*, of *power*, and of *prosperity*; the martial virtue of the Romans, the science of the Athenians, and THE COMMERCE OF THE CARTHAGINIANS!"

\* See vol. ii. c. 3. of M. Necker's work on the *Administration of the Finances*.



factories by prohibiting the importation of any foreign articles.

This plan, however, is pregnant with many unforeseen difficulties; for, however *rich* that country may pretend to be in internal resources, she depends on her neighbours for many raw materials, which are indispensably necessary to her; particularly for iron, wool, hemp, flax, cotton, tin, lead, copper, sea-coal, timber, masts, pitch and tar, tobacco, spices, drugs, and even oils. These are far from being mere objects of luxury or caprice, like most of those exported from France; they are truly articles of first necessity.

We do not here take notice of the importations of corn, cattle, and salt provisions, because such is the depopulation of the towns of France, that it may be supposed she will be able to supply the whole of her consumption, and will be satisfied with the production of her own soil. But what will then remain to be exchanged against all the various species of raw materials enumerated above? Only wines, brandies, and liqueurs (of which the exports formerly amounted to thirty-five or forty millions); nearly the same amount in cambrics, lawns, gauzes, silk stockings, thin woollen cloth, books, millinery, jewellery, embroidery, and the smaller articles of furniture. But it is very doubtful, whether within a few years all these objects united will pay for more than half the raw materials of which France will stand in need, and the foreign goods which, notwithstanding the vigilance of the officers of the customs, will be im-

ported in contraband, until her own manufactures become equal both in quality and cheapness to those of Great Britain and Germany.

Doubtless the impoverishment of the French will disable them for a long time from paying a very large tribute to foreign nations; but they will be unable to diminish it, except by limiting their enjoyments and reducing their marine, for the provisioning of which they formerly paid nearly twenty-five millions annually to the north of Europe. Then will they at last regret their numerous privations; then will the most deplorable state of weakness succeed to that paroxysm of febrile delirium which the ignorant herd of the people even now consider as symptoms of supernatural strength. The period, however, is not distant, when the nation will awaken from their dream: nay, we may almost say it is already arrived, if we attend to the following reflection, which the emergency of the public affairs forced from Villers on the 3d December 1797; "Let us examine," said he, "the real situation of our trade and manufactures. Neither the one nor the other afford us much medium of exchange. Hence *it results*, that France is *insensibly drained of her specie* to pay for the colonial commodities she consumes."

To give a complete view of this *result*, and of the list of purchases which *insensibly drain France of her specie*, Villers ought to have spoken of the raw materials which have never been produced in France, and the clothing she has ceased to manufacture: we should then have seen, that at present these three

objects must turn the annual balance of trade against her to the amount of nearly 100 millions:

Long before this speech of Villers, and during the debates which ensued upon the fall of Robespierre, Ozun expressed himself with less reserve, when he said, " All the powers of ignorance and barbarism have been combined to annihilate commerce, that most abundant source of the prosperity of France; and a year of crimes has destroyed all the elements of our ancient splendour." Bourdon added, that *they had every thing now to create anew, every thing to build anew, and every thing to repair.*

We may recollect, that even in England many very sensible persons doubted the truth of these declamatory confessions. We must also remember, that to convince the world they were mere idle declamations, the minister Ramel, when with much parade he assembled the commercial deputies, delivered that celebrated speech, in which he congratulated them on being placed in *the centre of communication between the two worlds.* " The opening of the Scheldt," said he, " will bring back to Antwerp the commerce of the North. Dunkirk is the emporium of the western and northern oceans; Rouen, Nantes, Bourdeaux, and Bayonne, of the new world; Marseilles that of the East; and Toulouse begins already to discover the advantages of her happy position. The inland trade carried on there will soon receive the tributary productions of the two great seas that wash our coasts. Our towns are placed in the most advantageous situations, and the whole world consider their inhabitants

as their masters in invention, and as their models in the art of improving on those of others. Citizens, let us reflect that this is the epocha, the critical epocha, when our manufactures and our commerce must either advance with rapid strides, or be totally annihilated. If we delay but a little longer ; if we do not, with a grand and vigorous exertion, overcome the obstacles we have been desiring to surmount since the beginning of the revolution, we shall remain far behind our rivals, and shall fall insensibly into *languor* and *discouragement*. When the victors of Jemappes, of Fleurus, and of the Rhine, will one day return from the field of glory, they will find no objects on which to employ their industry, and after astonishing all Europe with their brilliant achievements, they will disturb their mother country with their *unproductive restlessness*.—It depends on our own CHOICE, whether we are to become the *first* of nations, or sink into the condition of the *most miserable*,” &c.

The deputies to whom he addressed this confused and pompous mixture of truth and imposture, replied, that the choice he proposed to them was no longer in the power of the French, and that they were condemned to the wretched alternative of becoming *the most miserable of nations*. They *frankly* reproached the government and the legislature with the *desperate* situation of the manufacturers, of whom the new *mandats* had *completed the ruin*. “The hopes,” added they, “of the future do not efface the remembrance of the past, or the feeling of the present. The effects of anarchy still press with their full weight on the commerce of France, which *drags itself along*

*amidst its own ruins.* Her capitals are either dissipated or buried ; her manufactories are shut up ; her external connexions are ANNIHILATED."

How much more depressing a picture might they have drawn, if, in reply to all the extravagancies of Ramel relative to the conquest of Antwerp, and of the commerce of the *North*\*, they had stated facts which would have proved the dreadfully miserable situation of the two principal ports to which he had dared thus to direct their attention. What a wretched fall has Bourdeaux experienced, of which it might be justly said, ten years ago, that it laid the old and the new world under contribution ! whereas it can now no longer pay either the expense of lighting its port, or the salaries of the officers indispensably requisite to its police†. As to Marseilles, that city,

\* Among other facts they might have referred him to the registers of the *Sound dues*, since in the whole of the year 1796 ; and even at the æra when this minister congratulated the republic with having "*conquered the commerce of the North*," not a single French ship had passed the Sound, although 445 English vessels had entered the Baltic, or one fifth more than in 1790.

† In page 183 § of my last work, I extracted the report of La Brousse on the misery of the department of the Gironde, and the decline of the city of Bourdeaux. This report was followed by a not less remarkable *address* of the administrators of that city. While congratulating the legislative body on the memorable revolution of the 18th Fructidor, they took that opportunity to declare, "that one of the means to facilitate a *salutary vigilance* over the enemies of the country, and over thieves and assassins, was to light up that populous city with lamps ; but that it is impossible to employ against these depraved and crafty beings so active a police as the law and their immorality demand, because for nine months past its administrators have been unable to pay the commissaries and inferior agents of the police."—It is to be observed that a year after, Perrin, deputy for that department, again declared, "that these commissaries had received no pay during eighteen months, and that the good intentions of the Directory had been totally ineffectual." Such is, at this day, the situation of Bourdeaux, which, ten years since, held the first rank among

which was once so opulent, has, during the last five years, been the principal theatre of the convulsions and assassinations that have deluged the south of France with blood. Never perhaps have mankind beheld a more dreadful contrast than that exhibited by the present inactivity of its inhabitants compared with their former industry. During the two years, when England abandoned the Mediterranean sea, they might surely have recovered the Levant trade: but Laporte has acknowledged that England has now *taken possession of it*; that the French having manufactured their cloths without *method* and *discrimination*, have been reduced to merely *gleaning* after their rivals; and that the *impositions* committed in the manufactures of Lyons, have brought their commodities into *discredit*.

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all the commercial cities of Europe, London and Amsterdam excepted!

Toulouse, which, though inferior to Bourdeaux in opulence, had acquired considerable riches by becoming the emporium of communication between the two seas, has suffered a still more complete ruin than even Bourdeaux itself. Her administrators do not confine themselves to soliciting the means of lighting the town: they ask for pecuniary aids or loans, which they represent as *indispensably* necessary, lest the patience of the nurses of foundlings should be exhausted, and to prevent their bringing the children back to the hospital. "That city," said Destrem, on the 21st June, "possessed a revenue, before the revolution, of more than 400,000 livres; whereas now the most rigid economy cannot preserve them from a *deficit* of 173,929 livres. Since the month of Ventose (Feb. 1798) the public functionaries have received no part of their inconsiderable salaries; the lighting of the town has been diminished, and is on the point of being suppressed; the police is wholly inactive; and all the other departments of the public service suffer by this penury. Your committee proposes to put a stop to this alarming situation, by *empowering* that city to borrow 100,000 livres on its own security." This *power* was refused, because a loan to a city being taken from persons contributing to the national taxes would have diminished the receipts of the public treasury.

What could they now carry to the various ports of the Levant besides a few commodities from the West Indies? and these must be procured from the English, of whom they would become the retailers. Even were the ports of Constantinople, Smyrna, and Alexandria opened to France, the destruction of her manufactories has precluded her from enjoying that trade for a long series of years yet to come, though it was the more valuable to France, inasmuch as it consisted of the purchase of raw materials, particularly cotton, silk, and wool, and the re-exportation of them in a manufactured state. Neither can the republic spare any of her subjects, except soldiers, to carry on that branch of trade. Yet scarcely had its troops taken possession of Malta, while at peace with that island, before the southern departments seriously imagined themselves possessed of an *exclusive trade* to the Levant: as if the mere occupation of a military post in the middle of the sea were sufficient to insure to its commanders the whole traffic of the surrounding shores! or as if Gibraltar alone, and not the manufactories of Exeter, of Manchester, and of Sheffield, secured the markets of Spain to the English.

Can it be believed that only a few weeks after the commercial deputies had thus confounded the minister of finances, the minister of the interior joined him, and by a stroke of his pen gave the lie to all their assertions? To do this, it was sufficient to publish a summary of the *custom-house books* of the imports and exports, which he pretended to have kept during the year iv. and by means of which he certified that they

amounted to 386 millions ; and that, having investigated the balance, he had found *the result only three millions against France, notwithstanding the war.*

This *result* was far from according with the register which Dupont pretended, on his part, to have kept, and which he deposited in the Council of Elders, whereby he proved that in each of the three preceding years, 600 millions of livres had been exported in specie to pay the balance of the foreign trade against France. But though he declared that this exportation *was confirmed by authentic documents* ; yet it is more than doubtful whether his authentic documents deserve more credit than the pretended register of the minister of the interior.

How indeed would it have been possible to keep a register of the imports, at a time when the custom-houses were either suppressed or thrown into confusion, when scarcely any existed upon the frontiers, and when the army-contractors purchased in Switzerland, in Germany, at Hamburg, and in London, immense quantities of drapery which were imported, *duty free*, as the Directory themselves have acknowledged ?

Thus finding themselves surprised and forced into this confession, they readily perceived that if they ventured again to speak of custom-house books, some too credulous deputies might demand their publication. They thought it more convenient to anticipate them, by formally denouncing the English minister, on the 6th January 1798, as having *dreamed* of the total ruin of the commerce of France, and as having *in-*



*fulingly boasted* that her imports and exports did not exceed 400 millions \*.

\* In this *proclamation of the Directory to the French nation*; they reproach the English minister with having boasted that the imports and exports of England *exceeded seven milliards* (280 millions sterling).

Had any custom-house clerk, or other scribbler in London, advanced so extravagant an absurdity, every reader of a newspaper would have been able instantly to refute the assertion, the abstracts of the custom-house books being annually published; and though their valuations of goods may not be accurate, every intelligent and well-informed man considers them as a very instructive and valuable document, whereby to judge whether the industry of the country is progressive, stationary, or retrograde.

By the custom-house books of 1795, it appeared that the imports amounted to 22,749,476*l.* sterling, and the exports to 30,314,748*l.*, which is short of a milliard and a half of livres; and the pretended boasting of Mr. Pitt in making this representation was merely comparing it with antecedent years, to prove that, in lieu of suffering a diminution, the commerce of Great Britain had considerably increased during the war.

We must never forget that these valuations are made on old estimates of prices, which have long ceased to be the true market-prices of the goods; and the corrections begun in the year 1798 show, that to learn the true value of that part of the exports which consists in domestic manufactures, we must add about seven tenths to the amount which appears on the books.

With regard to the imports, besides the amount of the contraband trade, many articles appear on the debtor side which ought to be on the creditor; as for instance, colonial commodities, and the produce of the fisheries; and it is easy to conceive how much these omissions on the one side, and reduplications on the other, must add to the difficulty of developing the true annual balance of trade in favour of England.

Mr. Irving, inspector-general of the customs, one of the best-informed men on this subject in Europe, has made some very skilful researches to correct the numerous errors in the books of the custom-house, both inwards and outwards. The result of his calculations is, that the annual balance in favour of Great Britain has been about seven millions sterling in each of the years 1793, 4, and 5; and though this is more than double the sum M. Necker discovered in favour of France, by nearly similar investigations; yet the corrections and reforms which have taken place in the year 1798 afford a sufficient ground for believing that the real balance is much more considerable.

Yet as it does not appear that the mass of specie in the country has perceptibly increased during that interval, an inquiry naturally occurs, what is become of this immense balance?

This *boasting*, therefore, would reduce itself to the having quoted literally the boasts of the minister of

The maintenance of the English army on the continent, the sums sent to St. Domingo and Corsica, the expenses of the new civil and military establishment in the West Indies and at the Cape, the provisioning the fleets in the Mediterranean from the coasts of that sea; the maintenance of the army of the Prince of Condé, the subsidies granted to Austria, Prussia, and the kings of Naples and Sardinia, and the purchase of foreign corn, have, from the commencement of the war to the end of 1796, occasioned extraordinary drains of money to the amount of 44,884,000*l.* sterling. The interest of that part of the national debt which is held by foreigners, and the sums remitted to Englishmen travelling abroad, or residing on the continent, must also have kept back some millions from entering the country. Lastly, if on the one hand Great Britain has received from abroad some millions of specie since she has ceased to subsidize foreign powers, on the other hand this last sum must be counterbalanced by the diminished credits granted by English merchants in those countries which were exposed to the hostile invasion of the French.

Hence it results that the present war, which has been represented as so ruinous to Great Britain, has only cost her the whole amount of her profits during that interval; that is, the surplus of her East and West India produce, and of her own manufactures; a surplus which would have contributed to augment the amount of her foreign credits, or that of her specie, had she not been called upon to expend it in the support of the war, and of the armed coalition against France.

It is true, that I here take no account of the fall in price of the public funds, or the increase of the national debt; not that I would pretend to deny the attendant disadvantages, particularly of so rapid an increase as that of the last five years. But a well-constituted domestic debt, if it is owing to the inhabitants, cannot properly be considered as a diminution of the national wealth of a country, unless the weight of the new taxes, which are necessary for the payment of the interest, should clog the industry of the people. This is the rock which England must avoid, and future events will discover whether she is verging towards it.

But why should we appeal to the future when the present will enable us to decide the question? If we extract from the custom-house books a separate account of the exports of British manufactures, we shall find their average amount, during the last seven years, including 1798, to be 17,322,000*l.* sterling; whereas, in the seven preceding years, which had been considered as eminently prosperous, it was only 13,314,000*l.* sterling.

When we compare this fact with another no less notorious, I mean that the war has taken a great many hands from the manufactories of England, there are but two modes of explaining so unexpected an increase in the manufacturing productions of the country. Either the machines, which increase the productive powers of man, must

the interior : but every thing shows that the British administration have too well observed the decay of the trade and manufactures of France, for a moment to suppose that her external transactions could now amount to half the above-mentioned sum. It is, however, by no means improbable, that the people of that country might believe this pretended estimate of Mr. Pitt, since it was quoted in so solemn a message ; for nothing can equal the credulity of that nation, except the effrontery with which their present leaders invent and assert the grossest falsehoods.

To convince the people that they did not deceive them with regard to the prosperity of their foreign trade, the Directory were *empowered to coin gold and silver to the amount of 100 millions of livres per annum* \*. This, as appears from what has been said

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have been improved and multiplied, or the hands that remained must have made additional exertions in proportion to the increasing demand. In this manner I have, in page 128, explained why the productive labours of the French farmers have not diminished in the same ratio as the population of the country : and it is evident that machines to facilitate the processes of the arts may much more readily be contrived than those for the improvement of agriculture.

\* It is true, that the recoinage of the old specie will constitute a part of these 100 millions ; but they have taken particular care to be silent relative to the proportion it will amount to. It is also true, that it is under pretext of banishing the *last emblems* of the monarchy, that the coinage of this new national money has been urged, of which the legend will be A L'UNIVERS (TO THE UNIVERSE), indicating that the astronomical observations, by means of which the French republicans determine their weights and measures, according to the terrestrial meridian, ought to become the guide of all nations. One of the new deputies however ventured to blame this legend " as being *rather too pompous*, and calculated to excite the jealousy of other governments, who will attribute to the republic a design of substituting its coin for that of every other power."

Those governments, however, need not be apprehensive of this *substitution*, which, in the present state of affairs, can only take place

above, was taking it for granted that the French had a balance of trade in their favour, twice as great as M. Necker had computed in the times of their greatest prosperity, and of which that writer had adduced as the most essential proof, the annual sum of forty-five millions carried to the royal mints in gold and silver, being only a part of the gold and silver annually sent from foreign countries into France, in liquidation of their balance in her favour.

Since that time, however, every thing has been changed, inasmuch that, in lieu of receiving so large a balance from foreign countries, they are contracting a debt, which, I think, may be estimated at *one hundred* millions during the course of the present year, valuing their imports at 160 millions, of which the colonial commodities amount to at least sixty millions, and the fine and coarse calicoes, printed or plain, to nearly half that sum. The remainder consists of naval provisions, iron, horses, tobacco, spices, oils, cotton, and wool; but principally of cotton and woollen manufactured goods. It is doubtful however whether they can pay for more than fifty or sixty millions of these purchases in wines, brandies, silk-stockings, cambrics, lawns, gauzes, embroidery, millinery, books, &c.

This conjecture is confirmed by the present course of exchange on foreign countries, since twenty-seven livres ten sous are paid at Paris for every pound ster-

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by the force of arms. But as at present the French have an annual balance of near 100 millions to pay to THE UNIVERSE, this new *legend*, which appeared so *pompous* to the deputy, is, on the contrary, very modest, and very well adapted to the occasion.

ling remitted to England. The equally extraordinary rise in the relative price of gold compared with silver, of which we shall have occasion to speak more at length hereafter, must also be in part attributed to the enormous amount of the annual debt contracted by the French. This hitherto unexampled rise in the price of gold, as well as in the course of exchange, is at once a proof of the progressive scarcity of gold, and the ever-increasing demand for it for clandestine exportation : those who, in order to discharge a debt of 100 louis, cannot procure them in gold or silver, must pay at the present rate of exchange 113, 114, or 115 louis in remittances. Hence the specie of the country is conveyed out of it by armed escorts. In the *Moniteur* of the 4th of June 1798 appeared a curious fact, which came to the knowledge of the world by the imprudence of one of the new legislators named Bruslé. " At the time," said he, " when the Bank of England was obliged to suspend its payments, when we were expecting their want of specie to produce a commotion in favour of liberty, the English were drawing from France herself the gold and silver they wanted to prolong their existence, and form new plots against the French nation. The agents of the Directory seized, on the frontiers of Holland, an *escort* of money, amounting to more than 800,000 livres ; and *official declarations* proved, that twenty-nine others had *passed*. These exportations therefore may be estimated at near thirty millions, and those who remitted such enormous sums to our enemies, were a company of army-contractors of the republic, who even carried their effrontery so far

as to procure orders for escorting their remittances, as if they had been the money of the government. Thus did *the gold, that was destined for the Bank of England, pass the frontiers of France, escorted by the grenadiers of the republic \* !*"

Thus then, on this one frontier alone, and during a very short interval, the exportation of thirty millions in specie was proved by official declarations. This may assist us in calculating the value of other *escorts* which passed undiscovered, and without leaving similar traces behind them : a calculation to which Villaret endeavoured to draw the attention of the representatives of France, when he asked them, *how many years they would be able to bear this constant draining of their specie ?*

It would have been easy to reply to this question, that as it would be impossible long to support this continued drain, it would soon cease of itself, and force the people to deprive themselves of foreign luxuries, unless they choose to pay for them by the sale of their personal property, of which the most valuable part has already been dissipated. I cannot however but admit that Villaret placed too much importance on the actual draining of this specie, as he did also on its amount having *doubled* in the last seventy years.

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\* The object of this deputy in adducing these facts was, to prove the favourite maxim of the day, to wit, that the balance of trade against France arose from the *unpatriotic* use of English manufactures, and the *great consumption* of colonial commodities. It would not be easy to disprove that these are the real causes of the evil ; but it is far from clear that the remedy he recommended would prove effectual. He proposed a law against the TRAITORS who send the specie of France to the enemy, and who receive, sell, and distribute the manufactures of England.

Nothing surely was more natural, than that the French should rejoice in thus acquiring every year such extensive funds, such an additional quantity of gold and silver, since that acquisition clearly showed, that, after having provided for their necessities, and supplied their luxuries, there remained a large overplus of produce to exchange for other riches : but the gold and silver, into which they converted this overplus, by no means constituted the principal source of their opulence or prosperity : so far from it, that in some points of view that opulence and prosperity would have made the more progress, had they been less intent on accumulating gold and silver. Would it not, for instance, have been more profitable to them to imitate the English, who leave a part of their annual profits in the hands of their customers, and thus secure their preference by granting them a long credit ? Is it not evident that this nation thereby place out their money at compound interest, while the French, by realizing theirs, convert it into mere dead stock ?

But England, they will say, had not, nor has she still one third of our specie. This is precisely what has so much enlarged and extended her powers, and even enables her to procure, when occasion requires, as much specie as she may need. England has discovered two of the most important secrets of political economy ; for she has enough gold and silver to keep the wheel of her pecuniary transactions in motion ; and supplies all the remaining circulating medium required by means of paper, which performs all the functions of money, and at the same time saves to the nation at large the interest of the specie it re-

presents. This saving must be immense, since, were the English deprived of the aid of bank notes, they must indispensably purchase to the amount of twenty, thirty, or even perhaps fifty millions sterling in gold and silver; a purchase which would have deprived them, as it has France, of the power of granting those long credits in foreign markets, to which they owe much of their commercial prosperity.

What conclusion then must we draw from this example \*, and the principles here laid down? Surely, that France ought, above all things, to regret, not so much the diminution of her specie, as the decay of her productive industry, the overplus of which had enabled her to accumulate specie, and the defalcation of which condemns her to be gradually and continually drained of her gold and silver.

These discussions, to which I shall, perhaps, hereafter recur, seemed requisite to show that the quantity of specie in a country is generally of less importance than is imagined. I know not whether it may be considered as irrelevant, but it is some consolation to the historian of the ruined commerce of France, to indulge a hope that he is pointing out to those, who will one day rebuild this vast edifice, the sources of some of the errors committed by those who originally raised it.

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\* I strongly suspect that Bailleul had this in view when he acknowledged "that the fictitious signs of wealth naturally multiply in proportion to the activity and industry of a nation; that they may become so abundant, that specie may be employed merely for *old money*, and for *change*; that in a country where credit is fully established, gold and silver being mere auxiliaries, may be reduced to a very small quantity, without rendering the general circulation less active, or the resources of individuals less abundant."



All that has been said in the last chapter relative to the decline of the manufactures of France, the high rate of interest, the *immorality* and want of principle of the classes who still pursue commerce, and all the decrees that have favoured and solicited its increase by altering the *weights and measures*, and the national coin, applies with additional force to commercial transactions\*.

To this picture of desolation we must add that of the Newfoundland fisheries, in which the little town of Dieppe alone employed 556 vessels, amounting to 21,531 tons.

And will the incorrigible enthusiasts of the French republic dare to contest the representation of this

\* Almost all the laws which guaranteed their stability, have been repealed or violated; sometimes, it is true, by necessity, but more frequently through mere caprice. In the sitting of the 17th October some planters of St. Domingo having solicited a decree to *protect them from the suits of their creditors*, Duplantier and Bailleul said, with great reason, that *this application was just in itself*, since the government, whose power must be employed in these *suits*, had seized their plantations, and disposed of the crops, and that it owes, if not *protection*, at least *toleration*, to those who copy it in their *infidelity to their engagements*.

But four days previous to this decree, the same Duplantier had proposed another, abolishing *all debts contracted for the sale of slaves*, prohibiting the tribunals from pronouncing judgment on them, and setting aside those already pronounced, but which had not yet been executed. No one ventured to oppose this monstrous decree, and the negro Mentor ascended the tribune, invoking the grand principles of liberty, and calling his colleagues to witness, "that such *debts* are founded in the most odious injustice, that they awaken the most bitter remembrances, and the most grievous humiliations, in the Africans and their descendants." *Let the loss of a vile metal*, cried this negro, *expiate the crime of having trafficked in human flesh. The sweat of the brow, the labours, and the tears of the blacks, are a sufficient compensation.*

Every one must perceive the collateral effects, of so flagrant a refusal of justice; on commerce in general, and on that *immorality* of which both the Councils are daily deploring the too rapid progress.

vast heap of ruins, by urging either their new commercial tribunals, which have increased almost in a tenfold ratio since their commerce has been annihilated\*, or the circulars which the minister of the interior addresses almost periodically to the administrations of the departments, congratulating them, that *nothing has been able to arrest the rapid progress of that creative emulation which is the necessary consequence of liberty?* It is sufficient to reply to these disgusting impostures, by an appeal to the complaints of several of the maritime departments, who declare, that for want of funds for the most indispensable repairs, their ports are daily and visibly *choking up*, and that they are obliged to extinguish their light-houses, because they are no longer of use but to the ships of the enemy.

If there yet exists a man so blind as to deceive himself relative to the commerce of this republic of buccaneers, let him consult the language of those who boast of being its founders, and let him reflect on the confession which escaped from one of the present deputies, who is considered as the most enlightened merchant in France. In the sitting of the 15th July, a member of the Council of Elders having been candid enough to call the revolution a VOLCANO, Lecouteux rose to declare, that *this simile had struck him because it was just*. In fact, added he, *a revolution cannot be so well described as by comparing it to the eruption of a volcano*. FIELDS HAVE BEEN DEVASTATED, HOUSES SWEEPED AWAY, AND WHOLE CITIES SWALLOWED UP.

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\* There are no less than 249 in the old departments.

All these recent and authentic facts confirm me more and more in the conjecture I ventured to publish four years ago. Yes; I perceive the French nation sinking into a state of impoverishment, which, as soon as their neighbours shall have taken measures that will effectually repel their attacks, promises a long interval of repose. Yet if, on the one hand, this impoverishment gratifies their revenge, they must on the other expect that all Europe will ultimately suffer by its effects. Sweden will perhaps sell the same quantity of iron to the French, Germany an equal number of implements of agriculture, and Great Britain even a greater mass of sea-coal; but neither Piedmont nor the Levant will for a long time find in that country, the great market they want for their silks, Italy for her oils, Spain for her wool and her piastres, England for her muslins, and the northern powers for their naval timber. Thus will all these surrounding nations suffer more or less by the loss of so rich and extensive a market. What if France should even sink into that state of indigence, of anarchy, and of barbarism, in which Persia is represented at this day as languishing? But let us still indulge a hope, that the timely salvation of a temperate monarchical constitution, will preserve her from this severe and perennial chastisement. Let us hope, that when she is reduced within her ancient boundaries, when her inhabitants shall have returned to the paths of wisdom and of peace, and shall again exert themselves to enter into the orbit of prosperity, from which the revolution has so violently hurled them, the rest of Europe will be sufficiently enlightened, not only

to refuse taking advantage of their weakness, but to feel how important it is, even to them, that France should again become a happy country, and be attached to social order and commercial industry, beneath the beneficent protection of a wise and virtuous government.

But whatever shall be their future lot, it is impossible that with regard to foreign commerce they can long pursue so ruinous a career as that which they have followed during the last seven years. The gradual draining of their specie, the privations they will suffer, and their natural turn for industrious exertion, will force them, sooner or later, to find the equilibrium between their wants, and their powers of supplying them. Yet how can we fortel when this æra shall arrive, since it evidently depends on the restitution of her colonies, and the revival of her agriculture and manufactures? What a long period of time will it not require to repair all that has been destroyed\*? And what a wretched prospect of future

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\* It is principally to the foreign commerce of France that these alarming conjectures, relative to the future prospects of that country, apply; for I cannot help indulging a belief, that she has various internal means of recovering her prosperity, of which an enlightened king might accelerate the cultivation. But these, the present usurpers have placed it for ever out of their own power to improve; nor can even a lawful king recur to them till he shall have completely destroyed the *leaven of republicanism*. It remains also to be seen, whether the ministers, to whom he will entrust the reins of the empire, will be sufficiently enlightened to perceive, that commerce is but a secondary object; that it infallibly follows agricultural improvement, and ought never to precede it: in a word, that the impatient character of the French nation urging them to enterprises that flatter them with the hopes of making a fortune rapidly, he ought no otherwise to interfere or direct their exertions, than by encouraging agriculture, by protecting those who apply to it, and by giving as much power as possible to the landholders. It is time the French government should

misery threatens that deluded people, if they do not very speedily restore to the labours of peaceful industry, the few productive hands that remain ! Yet these important artificers of prosperity her leaders still devote to destruction, while they proclaim, at the same time, that the *resources of France are entire*, that they are *immensely great*, that those of her commerce are *inexhaustible*, and that *it is frequently owing to the possession of great martial strength that we are excused from the necessity of exerting it*. Strange language for those leaders to hold, who, when they entered on their offices, represented to the French nation, and even caused the maxim to be adopted, that *to be able to spend largely, is the most favourable situation to enable them to spend but little !*

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admit as an established dogma that maxim of the immortal Sully, *The two breasts that nourish France are pasture and the plough.*

But above all, it is necessary no longer to excite the inhabitants of France to misapply their strength, by giving them an extravagant idea of their own powers and resources.

## CHAPTER VII.

*Summary of the Losses of the French, both in Capital and in Income. Effects of these Losses on the Finances. Ineffectual Attempts of the two Councils to conceal the Amount of the Deficit of the Year vi.*

IT is so important that all nations should be informed of the extent of the losses sustained by France in consequence of the revolution, that I shall endeavour to reduce each of them to arithmetical valuations. I shall, however, hazard the discrediting my estimates by declaring, that they will inevitably contain several errors, and that my only object is, to establish, with as much accuracy as possible, that the ancient capital of that nation is diminished *four fifths*, and their income *two thirds*.

ESTIMATE OF THE CAPITAL OF THE FRENCH  
NATION BEFORE THE REVOLUTION.

In the year 1789 landed property alone formed the greatest part of the riches of France, and according to the most authentic estimates, represented a capital of about thirty milliards (1200 millions sterling \*). We have already seen that this species of property

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\* If we compare the intrinsic value of the silver coins of the two countries, the pound sterling appears to be worth only twenty-four livres eight sous. But if we compare the gold coins, or the louis d'or, with the guinea, the par will be within a quarter of a sous of twenty-five livres to the pound sterling. Hence the milliard is equal to forty millions sterling.

has sunk in value from thirty milliards to five, by the joint effect of a diminution of one half in the general income or rent of land, and a farther depreciation of two thirds in the price for which that rent can be sold.

But the land itself is not the whole of the riches of a nation. Their mass of wealth increases in proportion to their industry and activity, by the cattle that cover their plains, the cities they build, the moveable stock with which these are furnished and adorned, the manufactories and laboratories they erect, the colonies they establish abroad, the magazines they fill with merchandise at home, the vessels they build to carry it into foreign parts, the funds they possess there, the gold and silver they accumulate, &c. &c. In proportion as a nation advances in the cultivation of the useful arts, the value of this second class of capital approaches nearer and nearer to that of the landed property. I therefore estimate the former total amount of those items which do not come under the head of landed property, at twenty milliards (800 millions sterling), which I subdivide into five heads.

About three milliards (120 millions sterling) for the houses situated in towns, the value of which must have fallen in the same proportion as landed estates, and which are thereby reduced to half a milliard (twenty millions sterling).

About two or three milliards (80 or 120 millions sterling), which the inhabitants of France possessed in the colonies, in lands now almost wholly deserted or destitute of value, in negroes now emancipated, and in buildings which have been destroyed by fire

by those very negroes. It is more than doubtful whether the present remains of these branches of capital ought to be now estimated at more than one tenth, and they are probably over-rated, if we take them at a quarter of a milliard (ten millions sterling).

About four milliards (160 millions sterling) for the public funds or stocks, including those of the East India Company, and of the *Caisse d'Escompte*. For although in itself a fictitious, it is a *real*\* capital with regard

\* It would require a separate treatise to demonstrate this proposition, or point out the cases in which it does not hold. Let it suffice to say, that the legislators of France, who did not even suspect this truth, have suddenly discovered and proclaimed it, since they have found, by experience, what the state has lost by that bankruptcy, by means of which they hoped to emancipate it, and even to enrich it: On this subject Bailleul, on the 8th August, read a report, of which the editors of the *Moniteur* have purposely suppressed all the parts which seemed to give too just a picture of the *languishing state* into which this decree has plunged their country.

This report, the whole of which, in its original state, now lies before me, is a master-piece of composition, not only on account of the wisdom of its deductions, but of the correctness and elegance of its style; nor is it possible to attribute it to the deputy who read it at the tribune, and whose former writings bear the stamp of revolutionary violence. It is perhaps the best treatise that has ever appeared on the *theory* of national debts, and the advantages which nations, as well as individuals, derive from the practice of good faith.

The author has laid down as principles, 1st, *That a state, by not paying its debts, impoverishes itself*; 2d, *That if, with an excess of zeal and enthusiasm, the creditors of the republic should unite in gratuitously relinquishing their claims, and cancelling the vouchers of them, this patriotic offering ought to be rejected as a gift fraught with the most calamitous consequences.*

The following reasoning will fully prove the justice of these principles: "The original contracts which constitute the national debt being once cancelled and converted into a *shadow*, we must immediately *expunge* from the list of capitals which before existed in the state, a sum equal to the nominal value of this debt. We must *deduct* from the inventory of private fortunes a sum equal to their property in the public funds: a species of capital which ranked with that of land, houses, mortgages, and other property, real and personal."

This statement will enable the reader to perceive the reason why I have *expunged* from the account of the national capital of France



to the holders. But since it has been swept away by the national bankruptcy, and two thirds of the amount cancelled, the eighty-nine millions of *consolidated* funds which continue inscribed on the great book, and hence called inscriptions, only sell at three years purchase. These inscriptions therefore are no longer worth more than one fourth of a milliard (ten millions sterling \*).

About six or seven milliards (240 or 280 millions sterling) for personal property, consisting of, 1. wearing apparel; 2. furniture; 3. cattle; 4. utensils of trade and of art; 5. shipping; 6. commercial capitals; 7. debts owing by the inhabitants of foreign countries to those of France. Nothing can be more difficult than to appreciate these species of property, or the diminution they have suffered; but as they included debts which have been liquidated and dissipated since the revolution, as well as a considerable mass of manufactured goods, and of every kind of raw materials, which that country formerly had always on hand, but which are now completely exhausted, I think I am within the bounds of truth, when I estimate the reduction of these seven articles at from six to two milliards (from 240 millions sterling to 80).

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those public contracts which the bankruptcy has converted into a shadow. This however is not the only passage I shall have occasion to quote in support of the double inventory I here offer to the public.

\* The original of this work was written in the beginning of the present year 1799; since which, on the 1st April, the inscriptions, or French 5 *per cents*, had fallen to 10 livres *per* 100; so that those who before the revolution possessed an annuity of 300 écus, which were reduced to 100 by the decree of bankruptcy, can only sell this remaining annuity for 200 écus, or two thirds of what they formerly received annually.

About three milliards (120 millions sterling) in gold and silver, in specie, church and domestic plate, and jewels; a sum which must have been diminished by one half, not only in consequence of the balance of trade having been against France, but of the quantities of money buried in the earth, and the secret of which has died with the owners, who have fallen by the guillotine.

If these estimates are admitted as approximating to the truth, it will be found, by adding them together, that the ancient capital of France, which once amounted to fifty milliards (2000 millions sterling), is now reduced below ten (400 millions sterling); so that the fortune of a native of France, which was formerly 500,000 écus, would now be reduced to 100,000, provided the loss were equally divided among all the branches of capital we have examined.

It must be observed, that this enormous reduction of capital does not arise so much from the annihilation of actual property, as from the ideal diminution its various branches have suffered in the estimation of the people. So much, indeed, does their value depend on opinion, that the price of land may be doubled on the very day when the lawful heir to the crown shall reascend the throne; and should he adopt wise and effectual regulations and arrangements, even for the payment of only sixty millions of the interest owing by the monarchy, their value, which now scarcely amounts to 200 millions (eight millions sterling), might rise to near a milliard (forty millions sterling).

It is evident, that these kind of estimates can never be exact, were it merely from the ever-changing value the articles bear. They have, however, the advantage of fixing our ideas, which are both more intelligible and more easy to correct when reduced to arithmetical calculations.

It is necessary once more to point out this fallibility in our estimates, before I venture on a similar valuation of the old *net* revenue or *taxable income* of the people of France, which I think I may state at the same amount at which I appreciated that of Great Britain two years ago, viz. 120 millions sterling \*, or about three milliards of livres. And as Mr. Pitt has lately published a minute classification of the latter †, I shall improve the advantage offered by so valuable a document, taking care, however, to add

\* See p. 147 of the *Histoire de l'Administration de la République Française pendant l'Année 1796*.

† This estimate was formed with a view to appreciate the probable produce of that part of the income tax, which is laid at 10 *per cent*. Now as 10 *per cent*. is levied only on those incomes which amount to 200*l*. (a scale of taxation being adopted, which considerably reduces the contributions on smaller incomes, and entirely exempts all those which fall short of 60*l. per annum*), it remained to be found what proportion of this taxable revenue of 107½ millions was wholly exempt, and what proportion would pay in an inferior ratio. For this purpose Mr. Pitt presented an estimate, by which it appears, that he expects to derive from this tax in the current year a revenue of ten millions. It is to be observed, that in this statement he has not included the wages of either workmen, labourers, or servants; though these, perhaps, amount to as much as all the other branches of revenue, the latter being expended in these various kinds of wages. Now, although wages cannot be inserted in the general account of the income of a nation, yet they form a part of the taxable income of Great Britain; since out of these are paid the taxes on many articles of general consumption, as salt, sugar, tea, malt liquors, and spirits.

to the agricultural revenue of the French as much as they fell short of the English in commercial and manufacturing income or profit. These three milliards then I divide as follows, in order to discover the loss each branch has sustained.

ESTIMATE OF THE TAXABLE INCOME OF THE FRENCH  
NATION BEFORE THE REVOLUTION.

Millions    Millions  
Sterling.    Tournois.

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 44 | 1100 net income of land reduced to one half, or twenty-two millions sterling (550 millions livres).  |
| 12 | 300 annual income of the farmers, métayers, and cultivators of vineyards, reduced to about four millions sterling (100 millions livres).                         |
| 8  | 200 rent paid to proprietors of houses situated in towns, and, like that of land*, diminished by at least one half, four millions sterling (100,000,000 livres). |
| 4  | 100 net income of West India planters, after defraying all the expenses of cultivation and management. This branch of income no longer exists.                   |

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\* See the *Moniteur* of the 1st December 1798, No. 71, containing a report of Lauffat; in which he says, "the rent of houses is *almost wholly lost* throughout France, and requires a peace of several years to rise to its former level. This species of property is even become very burdensome to its possessors. Of this we must not judge by viewing the best streets and squares of Paris; but from a review of the principal towns in the departments, where the proofs of this assertion are unfortunately but too conclusive."

Millions    Millions  
Sterling.    Tournois.

12            300 interest of the national debt, annuities, dividends on East India stock, and on that of the Caisse d'Escompte, which, by the decree of bankruptcy, were reduced to *one third* \*. After re-

\* After having specifically appropriated to the discharge of this *third* part various branches of the revenue, which the national treasury has thought fit to apply to the expenses of the war, the two Councils have at length come to a generous resolution to pay it in *bons*; which will be received in payment of the direct taxes and of licences. It is very singular, however, that they have begun by paying the last half year's dividend of the year *vi.* without taking notice of the three preceding dividends, although Harmand declared, on the 22d September 1798, that they were *two years in arrears*.

As the return of these *bons*, with which this *third* is to be paid, will be so much dead stock to government, it was long under discussion whether that sacrifice should be made to the stockholders: but Huguet gained their cause by observing, "that such a determination would be *advantageous* to government, because it *would liberate the state from so much debt, although it would require no money*; and that it would be *advantageous* to the stockholders, who would *bless* the legislative body for this act of *beneficence*, even should they lose 25 or 30 *per cent.* on the *bons*." He was supported by Arnould, who agreed that the stockholders *would prefer receiving BONS immediately to the HOPE OF RECEIVING SPECIE at some future period.*

Thus then they will speedily receive in *bons* one of the four half year's dividends already due; but the law which orders the treasury to pay them, enables it, at the same time, to *retain a sum equal to the amount of their taxes, and only to deliver BONS for the difference.*

It was a *female stockholder* who had the merit of extorting this act of *beneficence* from the Councils, by representing, "that the state not paying what was due to her, she was unable to discharge the taxes of the current year, for the amount of which a *garnisher* had just been quartered upon her." After three months deliberation, the Councils determined to pay this female citizen in *bons*, which will be of no service to her except to *dismiss the garnisher*. Such is the decree for which the creditors of the republic are to *bless* the *beneficence* of their representatives! Surely it is impossible to mock misfortune with more effrontery! Nor would it be possible better to paint the disastrous consequences of so much injustice than is done by Bailleul in the following report, by means of which he obtained this act of *beneficence*:

"It is, doubtless, a cruel and a heart-rending prospect, to behold the citizens in a state of misery, and to bedew our cheeks with tears,

maining two years in arrears, they have at length begun paying one

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for the wretched creditors of the republic, who are continually amused with hopes that uniformly prove delusive: but their unhappy situation is not only a misfortune to themselves; it is a public calamity, which daily becomes more and more baneful to the state. Nor do we hesitate to assert, that one of the causes which has long proved most injurious to agriculture, to manufactures, and to commerce, and has, more than any other, impeded the *payment of the taxes*, is the suspension of the dividends.—Consider the great numbers of debtors who had no other means of payment—Consider those too, who, though having no direct connexion with the state in regard to their property, and the investment of their fortune, yet are distressed by their debtors, who do not pay them, because the latter are not themselves paid by the state; while the former are sued by their creditors, to whom they cannot even plead as an excuse the *insolvency* of the government, because to them nothing is directly due. Trace all the links of this concatenation of calamities, which extends to all classes of persons, shackles every man's fortune, renders every contract precarious, every engagement uncertain, the parties to every transaction unfortunate; destroys all the means of subsistence, corrupts the morals and probity of the people, and thus reduces private to a level with public faith; and then you will have a faint idea of the innumerable evils and disorders that arise from the total suppression of a national debt.

“ By keeping out of the circulation the annual and periodical supply of eighty-nine millions of livres from the dividends and pensions, the resources of the public treasury are in fact diminished in a still greater ratio, and deprived of a much larger sum. To demonstrate completely this assertion, we would willingly trace, step by step, the various channels which the innumerable subdivisions of these eighty-nine millions pursue when divided among the national creditors; we would point out to you all the processes by which this salutary repartition carries life and plenty throughout the capillary system of the state. You would then see how this sum, being first received at the public treasury, then passing from hand to hand, and satisfying all the private wants of the individuals, in fact multiplies itself to infinity, successively liquidating in its passage the debts of all through whose hands it passes; who, one after another, transmit it to their creditors, who, in their turn, pay it to those to whom they are indebted, and these to others. We would show how, after having discharged this first office, it is employed to supply the demands of the manufacturers, enabling them to pay wages, undertake repairs, erect buildings, form establishments, and purchase raw materials and other merchandise. We would show, how this same sum of money, when received at the national treasury to be introduced into commercial circulation, gives, in its progress, life and value to all the various branches of property it approaches. We

half-year's dividend in *bons*; which, considering the loss that species of

would show how, after having served as a medium of liquidating the debts of individuals, and of giving activity and employment to the industrious, it becomes the means of general prosperity and wealth. We would show how, after having banished poverty, it enriches every one, multiplies commercial transactions, and consequently facilitates the payment of the taxes by enriching the community. We would show how it increases the amount of the tax itself, by augmenting the value of the articles on which it is collected, as well as the quantity consumed, and consequently the number of bargains, and other acts which ultimately produce it, and enable every one to pay it. Lastly, we would show how, after having thus discharged an infinity of offices, it again returns in the shape of a *tax* into the public treasury, soon to perform anew the same series of services.—Do you not perceive what we have lost in the year vi. by not paying those dividends?—*not a THIRD of the taxes decreed have, in fact, been paid into the national treasury.*

“ We do not now receive one *third* of what was actually paid before the year 1790. And why this defalcation, but that our engagements are not fulfilled? because the creditors of the state, not being paid, do not discharge their debts to others? and thus *distrust* is become equally universal with the *want of faith*; and because, in such an order of things, there is no *emulation* or *industry*, and nothing remains but *discouragement* and *inpotency*.”

Let us now proceed to the picture drawn by this reporter of the influence of this *want of faith* in the republic, on agriculture, on manufactures, and on commerce. The length of this extract will be forgiven, when it is considered that this report, which was *delivered as that of a committee*, is at once a proof and a recapitulation of all that I have advanced throughout the six preceding chapters, which were already printed off when this official paper came to my hands. Every reader who is desirous of studying and estimating this diminution in the taxable income of the people of France, will perceive that it is impossible to have a surer guide than the document I am quoting.

“ In a state where commerce does not exist, money always seems extremely scarce, the borrowers are entirely at the mercy of the lenders, and consequently the rate of interest is very high.—If the interest of money is at an exorbitant rate, manufacturers will suffer in proportion to that calamity. The merchant refuses the orders he receives from abroad, because he can neither support a competition in price, nor grant the credits that are expected. If he wants assistance, he cannot find money for less than perhaps 15 or 20 *per cent.* because money is only lent on pledges. It is easy to perceive, that if the merchant cannot borrow directly on the commodities he purchases, neither can the manufacturer on the ar-

Millions    Millions  
Sterling.    Tournois.

paper must infallibly experience, cannot be taken as representing a capital of more than twenty-five or thirty millions (1,200,000*l.*).

24        70 for that part of the income of the clergy which was paid in *tithes*. It is impossible to form any estimate of what

ticles he makes; and hence it appears, that without the aid of credit every merchant who has not a considerable capital is obliged to suspend his speculations, and the manufacturer is prevented from exceeding his own funds, or perhaps is tempted to quit business, and put out his money to interest at 3 or 4 *per cent. per month*, thus abandoning a species of employment which is productive to the state, for operations which in themselves are prejudicial to it, and which are the consequences of the annihilation of *credit*.—Thus the manufacturers growing weaker and weaker, agriculture suffers a proportionable injury. The abundance of our present harvests proves nothing with respect to the future; for the farmer will exhaust the land, and the remainder of the stock laid out on it: he will leave off manuring, and rear no cattle. He will only sow what is indispensably necessary, and that without always obtaining a crop, for *the earth is greedy before it is generous*; the landlord will not receive his rent, the buildings will go out of repair, and the collection of the taxes will become impossible. Hence the price of land will fall considerably, and those who become purchasers will only buy on speculation, in the expectation of future advantage; but their imagination will be haunted with every fear, and they will have cause to dread the power of a government, whose necessities will render them unjust. Hence the circulation will daily become more languid, and the little money which the general distrust will suffer to appear, in lieu of leading to useful enterprises, will be swallowed up in the chests of a few greedy usurers, who will lend on terms of daily increasing severity to those who are anxious to keep together the wreck of their sinking fortunes.

“ In such a state of affairs, no great, no useful, no grand designs are formed; distrust becomes general, extinguishes genius, and withers the tree of national prosperity to its very roots.—It is impossible for the farmer to sell his provisions to any advantage.—As he can enjoy no credit, the want of money prevents him from cultivating his land to advantage, or bestowing on it the labour and expense it requires. The *abundance* that meets the eye, though a proof of the goodness of the soil, and the fertility of the climate, is no pledge of future plenty.”



Millions    Millions  
Sterling.    Tournois.

- may be the inconsiderable amount of the charities now bestowed on them.
- 4    100 in pensions on the pension list, and salaries of the various officers of government, the army and navy officers, and the income of the professors of physio and of law. These I estimate at one half, or fifty millions (two millions sterling).
- 8    200 profits of persons employed in other professions, trades, and callings, now reduced to at most one fourth, or fifty millions (two millions sterling).
- 30    700 or 750 for the profits of the proprietors of manufactories, their principal workmen and clerks, and the merchants who supplied them with raw materials, which they afterwards re-exported in their manufactured state, distributed over the country for home consumption, or sold to the inland retail dealer. This article includes not only the profit of foreign commerce, but the much larger and more various profits of the inland trader, land-carrier, and retail dealer; and, in a word, those of all the occupations connected with commerce: also the profits of sleeping partners, bankers, commission-merchants, brokers, underwriters, and all those who

intervene between the farmer or manufacturer, and the consumer : to which must be added the profits of the carrying trade, fisheries, and other shipping. Considering the destruction of the shipping, the decay of the manufactures, the ruin of commerce, and the total annihilation of the fisheries, it would be difficult to estimate all these branches as now producing more than 130 millions (5,200,000*l.* sterling).

This article, however, is extremely uncertain ; and it cannot be too often repeated, that this estimate, as well as most of the preceding, depends on data, none of which are clearly and positively ascertained \* ; yet

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\* In thus estimating at nearly a milliard the profits of those who are employed in the various departments of commerce, of manufactures, and of trades and callings, I have nearly agreed with Arnould, who, in 1791, estimated them at 1041 millions ; yet our data are entirely different, since he added the *net profits* of the foreign and inland trade to the *gross produce* of the manufactures, and of trades and callings, which he only estimated at 504 millions. But thus to combine these two objects, when speaking of the income of a people, is to take the pecuniary value of all the commodities supplied by a manufactory, or an estate, for the net and taxable income of the farmer or manufacturer.

Nothing can be more vague than the manner in which the French writers have hitherto treated of this subject. One of the most celebrated of the economists, M. le Trosne, has estimated the total income of France at 3134 millions, which is also very nearly the sum at which I have estimated it ; but he confounded the profits of the farmer with the gross value of the fruits of the earth, which are two very different articles. As to that part of the profit arising from commerce, he purposely omitted it, because the economists have always persisted in not considering it as entitled to the name of *produce*.

Arnould, endeavouring to rectify this computation, proposed a new one, in which, however, the *general reproductive produce* of the kingdom was still confounded with the *taxable income* of its inhabitants ; for he computed the territorial produce of France at 200*o*

if no considerable error is discovered in it; or if, in contesting the estimate of one or other of the items,

millions, although, in the rest of his works, he estimates the rents received by land-owners, and the profits of farmers, at only 1000 or 1100 millions. It is, however, these two last articles that constitute the *taxable income*, which is the only object of our present inquiry, the only one which it is really useful to examine, and the only one on which a statesman can expect to attain to any degree of exactness. It was by pursuing this method that Arnould arrived at a grand total of 3400 millions, in which, however, he neither included the taxable revenue of the clergy, who live upon their tithes, nor the salaries of civil and military officers, nor the interest of the national debt.

The minister Clavière, in his work on *Public Faith*, published in 1788, has estimated the income of the inhabitants of France at three milliards; and it is evident, he is only speaking of the *taxable income*. The only ground, however, on which this calculation stands, is that of Davenant, who, in 1698, computed the taxable income of the English at forty-three millions sterling, and that of the French at eighty-one millions sterling, or about two milliards of livres. Davenant, however, entered into no particulars, nor has the writer I have just quoted supplied the deficiency, having merely stated vaguely and as a fact, that the income of the French had only experienced an increase of one half in the space of ninety years. The sketch I have drawn of it has confirmed me in this idea.

I am much deceived, if the French economists will not contest the enumeration of the interest of the national debt more strenuously than any other. They will say, that to take an account of the interest of a debt as an item of national income, is to reckon it twice over; because it is paid out of that income. Though this objection appears plausible, yet the dividends on a public debt ought rather to be considered as a species of *ground-rent* held by one class of citizens, and charged on the income of the rest. This rent only passes through the hands of government into those of the creditors of the state; and since these creditors repay to the government, in the form of taxes, a part of the sums they receive as *dividends*, it is evident that the interest of the national debt constitutes a part of the *taxable income*. The author of the report which bears the name of Baillet-Latour, is, I believe, the first Frenchman who has either felt or explained this fact: but I am also of opinion, that he has much too strongly enforced its application, when he asserts that the regular payment of eighty-nine millions of interest would bring 300 millions into the national treasury.

Although the wages of artisans and journeymen are, to a certain point, not only taxable, but actually taxed, they cannot be included in the general account of the income of a nation, which we should thus multiply without end. This difficulty, however, de-

the general proportion of their aggregate diminution is admitted, it will follow, that the former capital of the people of France is reduced from about fifty milliards to ten, and their taxable income from about three milliards to one.

Such have been the consequences of the grand national confiscations, sequestrations, forced loans, *maximums*, requisitions, and, above all, of the *paper circulation*, which occasioned a total bankruptcy of forty-five milliards of assignats, two milliards and a half of *mandats*, many hundred millions of *ordonnances*, and of two thirds, or rather of the whole of the national funds, both old and new. And what remains after so many sacrifices suffered by this wretched nation? A constitution, whole pages of which, the guardians, to whom it is confided, are daily tearing out, while, at the same time, they are daily renewing their oaths of fidelity to its laws; the execration of all their allies, whom they have ruined and impoverished; and, lastly, conquests which will

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serves to be mentioned, to show that we ought not to pursue calculations of this nature with any expectation of attaining to the exact truth, but merely as an illustration of the subject.

So various are the views of writers on these topics, that Dupont, who attempted a similar estimate previous to the revolution, computed at only 1500 millions the truly taxable income of the people of France, including that arising from land, from the colonies, from the fisheries, and from commerce and manufactures; while to me it appears to have amounted to twice that sum. We differ, however, less than may at first appear in the principal general result of our calculation: I mean in the proportional diminution of the income itself; for, in December 1795, the same deputy acknowledged, that it could no longer be considered as exceeding 800 millions, or that it was fallen in the proportion of fifteen to eight; and if I compute the loss in the proportion of fifteen to five, this arises from a still further diminution in the productive industry of the French, and the total cessation of several branches of profit.

infallibly involve them in further sacrifices, although Barbé Marbois congratulated his countrymen on the security these conquests procured for their enjoying *four centuries of peace*. The president of the Council of Five Hundred even went further; for when exulting in the invaluable benefits arising from the revolution, he dared even to appeal to the people themselves, and take them to witness *how little it had cost them in comparison with its real value* \*.

What! has that revolution *cost so little*, whose bloody experiments have robbed the country of that monarchical government, under which alone its inhabitants can prosper, of the flower of the male and industrious part of its population, and of the morality of the remainder who still survive, of four fifths of their capitals, and of two thirds of their incomes!

It is principally to this last sacrifice that we ought to direct the view of those cabinets, who suffer themselves to be imposed on by the romantic boasts of the Directory. That quintumvirate endeavour to excite their fears by representing themselves as disposing at

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\* It is worthy of observation, that the president who thus expressed himself, is the same Bailleul, who, eight months after, delivered at the tribune, as the fruit of his meditations, the excellent report of which I have given so copious an extract, and which is the best proof of the poisonous fruits of the revolution.

It is also worthy of remark, that a few weeks before he thus tore off the veil that concealed from the view of foreign nations the real state of France, the same member had given the following advice to those of his colleagues, who began to be dejected with the contemplation of the future prospect: *We must not enable the enemies of the revolution to make a weapon of what we may ourselves say against its consequences. Even such as it now is, it will be BLESSED by every man who remembers, &c.*

will of the energies of a nation *whose resources are entire*. But if, after analysing these resources, we take the trouble to compare them with the extensiveness of the demands which they themselves represent as indispensably necessary for the next campaign, we shall discover these demands to exceed the total of the net and taxable income of this impoverished nation.

I shall here take leave to confirm my statements by a digression, which will throw considerable light on the enormous deficit of which I am about to speak. I have already had occasion to observe, that it is owing to the taxable income of the English nation having trebled within the last century, that, under George III. they are able to pay ten times as much in taxes, and yet have greater means of enjoyment, than in the time of William III. who levied only *one tenth* of the present amount of taxes on an income equal to *one third* of that of the present day. The cause of this is the impossibility of laying heavy taxes on necessities; whereas the limits to taxation on luxuries are indefinable; for in proportion as these increase, the state may, in case of need, continually augment the proportion of its demands. Thus it is easier to take the fourth part of the second million, and even the half of the third, than the tenth of the first. In applying this rule of experimental finance to the impoverishment of the French nation, it will be immediately perceived, that if the income, as well agricultural as commercial and manufactural, has been reduced to one third, or only to half its former amount, it is utterly impossible for the present governors to extort half the amount of the taxes

levied in the time of Lewis XVI. This position shall be illustrated by an example:

An individual who enjoys an income of 2000 livres *per annum* may, in strictness, devote 500 livres to the expenses of the state. But should some unforeseen event reduce this income to 1000 livres *per annum*, there no longer exists the same ground for demanding a fourth of his income, or 250 livres. In the first case, the state took only a part of his superfluity; in the second, it would deprive him of a part of his necessities. If, on the other hand, his fortune be increased to 3000 livres *per annum*, he may more easily give 1000 livres to the state than he could before pay 500 out of 2000. This example applies in an inverse ratio to the public revenues of Great Britain and France, and shows why the people of Great Britain are less burdened than formerly, although they pay a much larger sum; whereas the French are infinitely more oppressed, though the sum they pay is much smaller.

This principle is so well understood in England, that all those are exempted from the income tax whose net income does not amount to 60*l.* sterling *per annum*; and a scale is adopted, which takes only a hundred and twentieth from those whose incomes are of that amount. Above that sum it gradually increases in a much more rapid proportion than that of the income itself; for instance, one of 120*l.* is taxed not at a sixtieth, but a thirty-second; one of 180*l.* at a fourteenth; and all incomes amounting to 200*l.* or upwards, at a tenth. This scale is nearly the same as the progressive scale established at Athens. The citizens

were there divided into four classes; those who had an estate producing 500 measures of corn paid *one talent* to the state; those of 300, *half a talent*; those of 200, only *a sixth*; and all those under that sum *nothing*; just as from the new tax introduced in England, all those are exempt whose incomes do not amount to 60*l.* sterling *per annum* \*.

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\* However just in theory the universal adoption of a *progressive* scale of taxation, or rather *progressive diminution*, may appear, yet it is evidently inapplicable to a tax on land, because a law which should tax an estate higher when possessed by a single individual than when divided among several proprietors, would impede the progress of agriculture by destroying the emulation of landholders to extend their possessions. Hence it follows, that as a land-tax cannot be *progressive*, it would be unwise to make that the *only tax*, as has been proposed in France by the economists, to whose chimerical absurdities this is a sufficient and a conclusive answer.

Perhaps, however, even the Athenian scale might be admissible in respect to the land-tax of a small state like Geneva, or the democratic cantons of Switzerland, whose territories are very limited; and where it is, therefore, of importance to turn the industry of the inhabitants towards commerce and manufactures. But in an empire as extensive as that of France, and whose chief riches consist in land, to decree that they shall be taxed progressively, according to the fortune of the possessor, and not in proportion to the produce of the land itself, was enacting an *agrarian law*; for such, in fact, was that which the legislative assembly adopted on the 18th March 1793, alleging, that large estates were a great *social disorder*.

This decree, it is true, has been partly amended and partly repealed by subsequent laws; and the greater part of the legislators who proposed it, at length declare that the best means of taxing the rich is to tax the consumption of the *poor*.

It is to be observed, that the scale of taxation adopted at Athens was not so much an *ascending* scale directed against the rich, as a *descending* scale in alleviation of those citizens who had little or no superfluity to devote to the expenses of the state. Thus we have the curious phenomenon of the system of the Athenians being adopted and sanctioned by the British parliament, in the very same year when the French are deploring its evil effects, and when their rivals in democracy, the Dutch, have adopted a scale much less favourable to the poor.

But the modern Roman republic has surpassed her mother and sister republics in the fiscal art; for her consuls have discovered a *progressive* scale entirely new. The *Moniteur* of the 13th August 1798, No. 326, informs us, "that they have established a loan, to which



But why should we search the records of ancient history for proofs that the taxable means of a nation increase or decrease in a very different proportion from that of the actual incomes of the individuals, when the events that have so recently taken place in France furnish us with a complete demonstration of the theory which I advanced in the year 1796, and again maintained in the beginning of 1798; at which period I defied the Directory to levy *a million a day* on the whole of the republic. Many were then of opinion, that I was either deceived with regard to their resources, or that I was merely endeavouring to depreciate their power: yet I am now enabled to prove, that the sum total of what are called the *contributions* does not amount to much more than *HALF a million per day*.

As the financiers of France have exerted themselves to the utmost to conceal this deficit, it is of importance to point out the expedients to which they have had recourse for this purpose.

And first, in consequence of the decree which exacted, within the space of three months, a payment in *anticipation* of three fourths of the land-tax, the receipts of the ensuing month (November 1797) amounted to thirty-six millions; and the national

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those who have an income of from three to six thousand scudi † are to pay *a third* of their income; those from six to ten thousand to pay *two thirds*; and those who have more than ten thousand scudi *per annum*, to pay a *WHOLE YEAR'S* income. If these individuals want money for this loan, the state will furnish them with it on mortgaging their property."

This is what the Roman consuls call *outrunning their seniors* in the *sacred career of equality*.

† Roman crowns, which are the same with Spanish dollars.

treasury published the account, to prove that the revolution of the 18th Fructidor had become *a new æra in their finances*. During this interval several deputies exulted in the brilliant success of their new budget, and cried out in chorus with Riou, that *the receipts had never been either so rapid or so abundant; and that the law of the 9th Vendémiaire (30th September 1797) might be considered as the epocha of the REGENERATION of their finances* \*. But it must be added, that the treasury only thought proper to publish the receipts in November 1797; and that they exerted themselves to the utmost to avoid producing the accounts of the subsequent receipts, although the Councils repeatedly ordered them to publish *a full and particular account monthly*, under a threat of otherwise beholding another 18th Fructidor †.

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\* Sitting of the 13th December 1797.

† This menace was uttered by Riou on the 4th March 1798; but his colleague Portiez had anticipated him seven weeks before, when opposing some new project of expense. "Before we decide," said he, "on similar projects, we ought to be furnished with an exact account of the state of the treasury, and this, notwithstanding all the resolutions we have passed, we are unable to obtain. Hence we proceed *groping in the dark*, and decreeing *day by day whatever is proposed*, and this without any *precise idea of what is received and expended by the treasury*. But it is not thus that the representatives of the nation ought to vote—If we adopt this project, and if there should be found next month a deficit in the national coffers, I should not be surprised if we were told, *There is a deficit of so much, and this deficit must be supplied*."

This was the language of a clear-sighted man; but the treasury, who were equally clear-sighted, had no inclination to remove the veil during the negotiations at Rastadt, and therefore suffered the two Councils still to *grope on in the dark*, and decree, *day by day*, every disbursement that was proposed, without giving them the smallest idea whether they could do honour to their draughts. It was not till many months after this period that they came and said, *There is a deficit of so much, and this deficit must be supplied*. And not till then,

After having left them, during a long time, at the mercy of their accusers, the minister of finances at length came to their aid, and to show that it was through civism that they disobeyed the orders of the Council, declared, " that in the tenth month of the year vi. 191 millions still remained *due* upon the land-tax, and that the receipts on the personal contributions did not amount to a *twentieth* part of the tax."

Villers and Fabre had, long before this, complained of the *non-fulfilment* of the law of the 9th *Vendémiaire*, or the budget of the year vi. ; and if we recollect, that they were themselves the proposers of this law, and that, at the time of bringing it forward, they had taken upon them to guarantee, that the 616 millions of expenditure *would indubitably be covered by the monies that would be received* \*, no one will wonder, that on perceiving that these receipts would hardly produce *one half* the sum expected, they endeavoured again to take in hand that celebrated budget which they had thus caused to be acceded to without examination, by representing it as a new and grand system which had been *completely moulded at once*, and which ought to be adopted without any modifications whatever.

After eight months trial of this new system, Ozun ascended the tribune, and expressed himself as fol-

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that is, not till the last decade but one of the year vi. did they present the accounts of the receipts and expenditure for the first eleven months.

\* Fabre, in the sitting of the 4th November 1797.

lows : “ The law of the 9th Vendémiaire has been erroneously considered as a *complete system* of finances : it was but the *frame-work*, and that frame-work has never yet been filled up. In fact, it only pointed out some *sources* of revenue, but without *constituting* the revenue itself.” This criticism on the above-mentioned law, though rather tardy, was the more just, as the greater part of the taxes included in the budget of the 9th Vendémiaire had only been decreed in *principle* ; and although they required other laws of a more circumstantial nature, before they could *constitute* or procure a revenue, the legislators had constantly refused to hear of these new regulations. It might almost be said, that they had resolved, in all respects, to imitate the party they had just transported to Cayenne, for the atrocious crime of having left the government destitute of funds. Hence, at every refusal, Villers and his co-operator Fabre, who trembled lest they should be rendered responsible in their turn for the deficiency of the year vi. continually repeated that the taxes decreed were to be followed by *organic* laws which must be *organized*.

Thus it was not till they had long prepared the Council to hear of a deficit, though always avoiding to specify it, that Villers ventured to propose, on the 1st June, a new list of taxes, in lieu of those which they had consented to *decree*, but refused to *organize*. “ If we are at this day,” said he, “ obliged to remodel the budget of the 9th Vendémiaire, it is because that law is not so productive as we *imagined* it would prove.—Do not abandon yourselves to the most dangerous of all systems, that of a *false security*.” This

lesson having been well received, as was also the new list of taxes brought forward by this speaker, he thought it a favourable moment to apprise the assembly, that "these new taxes would only tend to the improvement of the old, and that the committee of finances would *speedily* propose additional taxes to supply the deficit." But the journal of the debates informs us, that Villers had no sooner uttered these words, than he was *interrupted by murmurs* of disapprobation\*; and that, to silence his interrupters, he let these words escape him: "Representatives of the people, the pay of the troops amounts to *three millions per decade*. It is impossible as yet to diminish your expenses in any respect; yet the receipts come in with a *most discouraging tardiness*. Know that since the 1st Vendémiaire NOT TWO HUNDRED MILLIONS have been received!"

We may observe, that, notwithstanding his chagrin, Villers still preserved some prudence, and only suffered one half of the secret to escape him; for while thus declaring they had *not received* 200 millions in eight

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\* This scene, which was but a prelude to what followed, was extremely animated: *Can we then adjourn the necessities of the republic?* said Crochon, when endeavouring to procure silence for Villers to proceed. But being like him interrupted, he added in a louder voice, "*It is said the proposed taxes will only produce eighteen millions; let us however adopt them; for even that sum is a considerable diminution of the deficit. You may adopt others afterwards.*" Another member put a stop for a moment to all these controversies, by the following important observation: *It is not enough to act speedily; we must act well; especially in finances.* Thus, in order to act well, they did not act at all. *Murmurs* were the only answer Villers and Crochon received to their new budget, and the only subsidies granted to the Directory were strong exhortations to *economy*. "A republican government," said Lacuée, "can alone render the people happy; but order and economy in the finances are also powerful means of preserving that form of government."

months, he took care not to specify the precise amount that had been received, or to compare their late receipts with those of the month immediately following the revolution of the 18th Fructidor.

But this reserve had become almost useless; for in the same debate in which Villers's colleagues endeavoured to silence him, he revealed the following fact relative to the expenditure: "It is but too true," said he, "*our expenses are enormous. It is a melancholy truth—but we must candidly acknowledge it. The maritime war you are carrying on against the last of your enemies will, in fact, be more expensive than the continental war which you have waged against the whole of Europe.*"

Yet notwithstanding the pains the members took to speak as vaguely as possible of the gross amount of the deficit, it was impossible that, while discussing the necessity of supplying the void, they should not remove more and more of the transparent veil with which they attempted to conceal it. Thus Lucien Buonaparte, under pretext of opposing the army-contractors, whom he described as *watching every operation of finance, and as being endowed with the ill-starred gift of Cassandra*, proposed as the first step to be taken towards putting a stop to their discoveries, *no longer to discuss matters of finance except in secret committees* \*. They adopted his proposal; and to these private assemblies Ramel, the treasury, and the committee of finance, confided their alarms, and presented the

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\* See the Moniteur of the 18th August 1798, No. 331.

particulars of the deficits in every branch of the revenue.

Notwithstanding all this care to conceal it from the army-contractors, from their allies, and from their enemies, and notwithstanding the treasury, who were forced in this interval to produce the accounts of their receipts, had so drawn up their statement as to make them appear more abundant than was imagined, and even to have amounted in eleven months to 342 millions; the truth suddenly came out through the intemperate language of a new member named Drémore, who in the last decade but one of the year vi. and but a week after the treasury had presented their accounts, wholly destroyed all the effects of their precautions by the following observation: " I observe, that notwithstanding all that has been said on the part of the committee of finances on what passed in the year vi. it does not appear that the deficit was really 400 millions out of 616, since they have not again brought forward any of the *projects* for filling it up that were rejected by either of the Councils \*.

Had they not even *brought them forward* since that period, as in fact they have, every one may judge of the force of the *observation* of this logical reasoner. After the confession he suffered to escape him, and which is the only express declaration we have of the extent of the deficit †, it is almost unnecessary to say

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\* See the Moniteur of the 6th September 1798, No. 350.

† Bailleul had declared it; but not only his statement was a month prior, but, like that of Villers, was rather a negative than a positive assertion. He expressed himself thus: " On the 18th of the tenth month of the year, the amount of all the contributions and all the

more to prove that the ordinary and extraordinary ways and means from which 616 millions were expected, have, throughout the whole year, scarcely produced half that sum. And as the sale of timber, the revenues from the unfold confiscated estates, the sale of a part of them, and the Batavian rescriptions delivered to the army-contractors, or negotiated with great difficulty at Hamburg, must at the least have produced a third of this small sum; and as these four objects can by no means be classed among the *contributions* of the people; we have at last a proof, that notwithstanding the extortions of the garnisers, and although the Directory boast of having acquired by their conquests *six* millions of taxable subjects, the Great Nation has hardly, in the course of this year, paid into the republican treasury *taxes* to an amount much exceeding one third of the sums received by the royal treasury under the administration of M. Necker.

Such is the real state of facts, which disconcerts the financiers of France extremely: and it must be acknowledged, that while endeavouring to discover the truths which they have concealed from the world, and which explain these facts, one difficulty is scarcely ever resolved without raising another of still greater magnitude. If it is proved, it may be said that all the actual receipts have not even produced half of what was considered as certain, or what was wanted for their indispensable disbursements: if it is true, as the Directory have asserted, that, even before the conscription took place, the pay of the land troops alone

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receipts was scarcely equal to a *third* of the sum wanted; it does not amount to as much as the land-tax alone."



amounted to three millions per decade, how could they, after supporting so great an expenditure, attempt new military and maritime enterprises, the expenses of which must have been very considerable? This is without exception the greatest enigma the republic has exhibited since the fall of the assignats, and I should find the utmost difficulty in resolving it, had not the Councils imprudently obliged the national treasury to publish a *full and particular account* of their receipts and disbursements since the revolution\*. This *account*, which is absolutely unintelligible as to

\* A little while after Duchatel had denounced the treasury for not having laid before the nation any statement of the receipts since the 1st Vendémiaire, they determined at length to obey these reiterated summonses, and in their publication of the accounts which had been thus imprudently demanded, they began with these remarkable words: *Herein may be found documents relative to all that has been done both to save and to ruin the republic.*

These documents, which were published at Paris in October 1798, form a folio volume, which now lies before me, and of which I shall be readily excused from presenting the reader with an abstract, when he is informed that it contains an account of ninety-six milliards (3840 millions sterling) expended since the commencement of the revolution, and heaped together, without order or distinction, in assignats, mandates, and specie.

In these accounts nothing appears with clearness or distinctness till the year v. during which the expenses to be paid in cash amounted to 339 millions, of which it appears that ninety-five were paid in *ordonnances* (orders or draughts on the treasury), which were got rid of by the decree of bankruptcy.

The expenses of the eleven first months of the year vi. are stated at 333 millions; but no account whatever is given of what part was paid in *ordonnances*, afterwards called *letters of credit*, which were still unliquidated at the time of the publication of this *full and particular account*.

It is much easier however to form an idea of the receipts than of the expenditure; but it was not till the message of the 2d of February 1799 that we could arrive at a tolerably accurate idea of the former during the year vi. or from the 22d September 1797 to the 22d September 1798. The following is a statement of the net annual produce of what may be called the permanent ordinary taxes paid by the French nation:

every thing that relates to the time of the paper circulation, merits somewhat more confidence with re-

	Millions.
<i>The enrégistrement</i> paid for enrolling all contracts, including, among other articles, a per-centage on all inheritances, not only collateral but direct, as well as on all sales and transfers of real property, estimated in the budget of the year vi. at seventy millions, has produced only - - - - -	63,620,718
The stamp duties, estimated at sixteen millions, have produced only - - - - -	13,534,708
The tax on mortgages, estimated at eight millions, has produced only - - - - -	1,347,707
The licences ( <i>patentes</i> ), estimated at twenty millions, produced short of - - - - -	17,000,000
The customs, estimated at eight millions, produced net - - - - -	10,000,000
The post-office, estimated at ten millions, produced only - - - - -	7,000,000
The lottery, estimated at twelve millions, produced only - - - - -	6,000,000
The diligences and other public carriages, estimated at one million, produced - - - - -	1,000,000
The duty on saltpetre and the seignorage on coinage, and on stamping gold and silver plate, estimated at one million, have produced nothing - - - - -	0,000,000
The first seven articles may be considered as very accurate, because they are taken from the messages of the Directory, and the reports of various committees; but the same cannot be said of the four <i>direct</i> taxes estimated at 255 millions, viz. for the land-tax, the mobiliary-tax, the poll-tax, and the sumptuary-tax, of the non-payment of which continual complaints have been made, though without at any time stating either their general produce or their general deficiencies. By a comparison however of various confessions which have escaped at different periods, it will be taking the produce at the utmost to estimate them (so as to make a round sum) at - - - - -	80,496,867
Which make the total of the taxes received by the national treasury during the year vi. - - - - -	200,000,000

It is important to observe, that, independently of these taxes received by the national treasury, the people have paid, 1st, Several millions in *additional four*, which have been expended in the departments in local and departmental expenses, salaries to judges, administrators, &c.; 2d, The *droits d'açroi*, or duties on provisions brought into Paris, and the produce of which is paid over to the hospitals; 3d, Turnpikes, the produce of which is appropriated to the repairs of the roads; 4th, The tax on theatres, which has produced at Paris about 1000 livres (or forty pounds sterling) *per day*;

gard to the eleven first months of the year vi. the receipts of which are stated at 342 millions.

I see no reason to suspect the accuracy of this account. Yet the reader will no doubt say, that here the treasury directly contradicts the reports of Villers, Drémore, and Bailleul, according to which it appeared to be an established fact that the receipts did not exceed 216 millions in eleven months, or 240 for the whole year. This contradiction however is done away, when we reflect that these deputies only spoke of the receipts at home, and not of the foreign pillage, which evidently forms a considerable item in the

and, 5th, The duties on gaming-houses, which have produced nearly an equal sum, which is paid over to the police.

It will be taking these five taxes at the utmost to estimate them at twenty-five millions (one million sterling) for the year vi.; but independently of these 225 millions (or nine millions sterling) which the people have paid in *permanent ordinary* taxes, the treasury have collected nearly 100 millions by *extraordinary* ways and means, namely, 1st, The salt-pits confiscated and let to farm; 2d, The Batavian rescriptions negotiated at a loss, and now exhausted; 3d, The rent of the national confiscated lands still unfold; 4th, The sale of some of these lands; 5th, The gradual receipts for those formerly sold, and to be paid for by instalments; 6th, The felling of timber; 7th, That portion of the foreign pillage which has been brought into the national treasury.

This foreign pillage includes, 1st, Such of the American vessels as the Directory caused to be seized even in the ports of France, and the produce of which must have been brought into their coffers; 2d, The contribution exacted from the Grand Duke of Tuscany; 3d, The forced loan at Lucca; 4th, The spoils of the churches and palaces of Rome; 5th, The spoils of Switzerland, where the nation of *deliverers* seized the treasures of Zurich and Berne, and declared not only the *caisses d'ephargne*, or savings of the patrician families, but even that of the public hospitals, to be *French property*.

The best-informed of the Swiss calculate that the gold and silver carried away by the French amounted to near fifty millions of livres, of which about one half became the prey of the officers and soldiers, and the remainder was sent to the national treasury at Paris, who, it is asserted, have employed the spoils of the most ancient ally of France to attack her most faithful friend the Ottoman Porte.

statement of the treasury, although those who prepared it for the press have with the greatest care avoided showing under what title we are to look for this plunder, or how we are to trace it and discover its amount\*.

In the second place, Drémont only spoke of the receipts in specie; and a part of those which the treasury described as actual or *effective* receipts, evidently consists of the *presumptive* receipts which they were obliged to describe as having already taken place, because they had warranted them so to the army-contractors, to whom they delivered *ordonnances* on the cashiers. Although we find no information on the principal object, I mean the amount of such of these *ordonnances* as were not yet paid at the end of the year vi. we may, without fear of exaggeration, estimate them at thirty millions; and as the foreign plunder must at least have amounted to that sum, we thus at length discover how the treasury were enabled to dispose of about a million *per* day. But however incomplete their accounts may be, through the obscurity in which they leave us with regard to these two articles, it is nevertheless an uncommonly instructive document, were it merely because it contains a proof that the receipts have continually decreased: so much so, that though the receipts of the first month amounted

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\* As the booty they yet expect from their enemies and their allies seldom appears in their budgets among their presumptive receipts, the treasury have been decent enough not specifically to mention it among those of the year vi. where this article is included under the title of *Versemens*, which it is impossible to distinguish from their ordinary receipts. They have however expressly stated the extraordinary contributions of Italy as having amounted during the year v. to forty-four millions.

to *thirty-six* millions, those of the eleventh fell short of *twenty-seven* \*.

As to the expenditure, no accounts have been given except for the first nine months of the year, during which they amounted to 268 millions, three quarters of which have been swallowed up by the departments of war and marine †. This part of the account gives birth to three other very important observations, tending to undeceive those nations who still suffer themselves to be misled with regard to the innumerable armies of the republic, and its inexhaustible resources for the defence of their present conquests, and to acquire more.

1. As the ordinaries and extraordinaries of the army, which is maintained at the expense of the republic, had been estimated at 340 millions, but have scarcely exceeded half that sum; this saving can only be accounted for by a corresponding diminution in the number of soldiers, who have the more easily obtained their discharge, because their paymasters have

\* The total receipts during the first half-year were 198,976,143 livres, or rather more than thirty-three millions for each month.

The receipts during the three following months were 89,679,143 livres, or somewhat less than thirty millions *per* month.

The receipts in the tenth and eleventh were stated at only 53,943,697 livres, or somewhat less than twenty-seven millions *per* month.

† The following are the amounts of these items taken in round sums:

	Millions.
Pay of the land troops - - - - -	91
Other expenses of the war department - - -	49
	— 140
Pay of the navy - - - - -	32
Other expenses of the naval department - -	36
	— 68
	—
Total	208

frequently been reduced to a total inability to pay them their daily allowance\*.

These discharges, though at first unperceived, were at length carried to such a height, that the Councils caught the alarm; and the Directory, when called upon for an explanation, revealed that *near two hundred thousand men were wanting to fill up the complement of the regiments*. It is true, the same has not been the case in the navy, the expenditure of which was fixed at eighty-three millions and a half of livres, and exceeded three fourths of that sum during the nine first months; but as a part of the amount has been settled for in the *ordonnances* yet unpaid; and as at that period the treasury was disencumbered of the Toulon fleet, and the army of Buonaparte, every thing concurs to show that eighty millions remained in specie to satisfy the avidity of the two Councils, and that of the Directory, the ministers, ambassadors, consuls, and clerks of the treasury, to whom a preference is invariably given over all the other servants of the public†.

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\* The same conclusion might have been deduced from an apologetic defence of the war-offices, by Saint-Aubin, who endeavoured to demonstrate their economy, by the contracts for shoes for the army, which contracts would in fact show that the consumption was not half so great as in the preceding year. It is therefore evident, that, to prove his position, this writer ought to have added, that the number of the troops at home had not been reduced more than half, though this branch of their clothing was. But this explanation he thought proper to avoid. The war minister however, who had employed him in his defence, was less reserved; for in his circular of the 24th August he expressly says, "that the enemies of the republic have only deferred making peace, because they *saw* the armies of the republic *weakened*."

† The items of expenditure which relate neither to the army nor the navy, amounted, during the first nine months, to about sixty

2. Although in the account of the expenses of the year vi. the pensions, even when reduced to one third, amounted to twenty-three millions, and the interest of the national debt to sixty; and although article cx. of the law that decreed their payment, had particularly appropriated to the discharge of these eighty-three millions the whole produce of all the taxes decreed under the name of *enrégistrement*; the accounts of the treasury prove, that during the nine first months they only disbursed 6,951,348 for these two objects: and as this small sum was paid only to the pensioners \*, and not to the stockholders, it is

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millions. The following are some of the principal articles, and these must certainly have been paid in *specie*.

The legislative body has received, under the name of *indemnities*, 8,107,277 livres; and the Directory, under that of *salaries*, 2,153,109.

The department of the minister for foreign affairs cost, during the same period, 3,331,930.

The three departments that have the management of the finances, that of the minister of contributions, that of the treasury, and another known by the name of *comptabilité nationale*, have had a considerable share in this sum; for during these nine months they divided among themselves 9,993,758 livres, which is at the rate of thirteen millions (520,000 pounds sterling) *per annum*, not for collecting sums to the amount of between fourteen and fifteen millions sterling, levied within and without the country, but merely for keeping the accounts. The officers of the same departments of superintendence in England do not cost a fifth part of that sum, although their accounts comprehend four times as large an amount.

\* Under the head of pensions in arrear must be included those of the *widows* of the defenders of their country, amounting to nine millions; the alimentary aids promised to the children of those whose property has been confiscated; the pensions assigned to the refugees from beyond the seas; and the *fourth part or quarter pay* guaranteed to the 25,000 reformed officers. It must be remembered that these last had been the chief agents in the revolution of the 18th Fructidor, to accomplish which they poured in crowds into the capital to strengthen the Directory, who seemed to solicit their assistance merely to obtain the subsidies requisite to discharge what was due to them. "*I know not,*" said Talot, a week after that victory, "*what obstacles exist to prevent satisfying the demands of these 25,000 officers.*" The obstacles were immediately removed by a decree, granting them a *pro-*

evident that the war service and the two Councils have swallowed up the interest of this *third*, so lightly consolidated, and so solemnly promised.

3. Another equally important observation, and which also explains why the Directory have been able to go on with so inconsiderable a portion of the subsidies granted for defraying the expenses decreed, is, that many of these disbursements attending measures which they engaged to proceed in without delay, have not taken place. Among these is that of the judges, the majority of whom have received no salaries during eighteen months; that of the public education, and the primary schools, which have not yet been organized; and, above all, the aids assigned to the civil hospitals \*, and to the 800 prisons, where 22,000 pri-

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*mise of speedy and efficacious relief; upon which most of them returned to their homes.*

No further discussion arose on this subject till the 21st July, when General Jourdan denounced a petition from one of these reformed officers as a *defamatory libel, dragging the national representation and the government through the dirt, and painting them as UNGRATEFUL towards the military.* The Council of Five Hundred immediately sent this petition, which was from a lieutenant of invalids, to the Directory, not for payment, but for punishment.—A subsequent report informs us, that all these reformed officers have not received any pay during *eighteen months.*

\* Their distress at the present time exceeds all description. To form an adequate idea of it, we must remember, that independently of the confiscated hospital lands, twelve millions which they enjoyed in duties on provisions (*droits d'octroi*), and seven millions in feudal revenues, have been taken from them, besides their funded property, of which the national bankruptcy has suppressed two thirds.

After imagining they had enriched themselves by plundering these establishments, the government have been obliged to grant them assistance, and during the last year of the paper circulation were still in a condition to sacrifice a mass of assignats equal to fifty millions of *specie* to their support: but the budget of the year vi. only assigned them a tenth part of the sum they received in the year iv.; that is, five millions, of which only one million was appropriated to the



soners are breathing an infectious air, and the two sexes heaped together without distinction, although a mil-

provincial hospitals, and four to those of Paris. Yet even the preference thus apparently promised to the latter was but a fallacious hope; for on the 25th June 1798, the Deputy Jouenne said, *Though we are now in the ninth month of the year, they have only received eight hundred thousand livres.*

Incredible as it may appear, the provincial hospitals have received a sum proportionally small. At the time when Jouenne complained of the distressed situation of those of Paris, Génissieux replied, that "the administrators of the hospitals in the departments are constantly and loudly complaining, and calling the attention of the government to their situation. At Grenoble," said he, "the founding hospital is 40,000 livres in arrear, and the infirmaries 60,000. I have no doubt similar causes of complaint exist in all the other departments."—"Here," says the Moniteur, "innumerable voices cried out, YES, YES, THAT IS TRUE."—Alas! it was so much too true, that four months after, Garat ascended the tribune to declare, that during the year VI. a great number of the sick and indigent died (in the public hospitals), to whom neither BROTH nor BREAD could be given.

Laporte had announced a few days before, "that in consequence of not being paid, the nurses bring back the children, who are left to die."

What adds to the horrors of this abandonment of the sick and indigent is, that notwithstanding the rise in the price of wages, which ought to have reduced their number, they seem to have increased in proportion to the diminished resources of the treasury to afford them relief. This is confirmed by a recent publication at Paris, by Citizen E. Lefebvre. That writer asserts, that the number of the poor and of beggars is increased by two thirds, of which the government may easily be convinced, by comparing their present numbers with that of former times.—I have no other knowledge of this work than through the replies of the minister of the interior, who caused it to be answered in the Moniteur, saying, that the former government concealed the number of the wretched to make men believe that none existed; and that the accounts of the hospitals prove them to contain a smaller number than they did in 1789. However, if we refer to the Moniteur of the 13th September 1798, No. 337, we shall find an official report of Laporte, wherein he announced that the number of persons in all the hospitals of the republic, not including the incorporated departments, was 161,832, of which 51,042 were foundlings.

It is very difficult to imagine the number could be greater formerly, as the partisans of the present minister say: but it is a singular mode of reasoning to attempt to prove this by asserting that there are now fewer of the indigent, who solicit as a favour to be admitted into the hospitals, where they are assured, before they enter, that they will receive neither broth nor bread, and that they will die without relief upon an infected bed!

lion was voted merely for their separation, and to protect them from contagious disorders, which carry them off as fast as they are brought in.

Another article of expenditure equally neglected, is that of the public works, the dilapidation of which becomes daily more rapid and more threatening.

Scarcely had the legislative body voted an inconsiderable relief to the inhabitants of the district of Dol, where the sea-dykes had broken in, when they were informed by the Deputy Cholard, "That the salt-pits of two departments had been inundated by the sea, and that some of the salt marshes would require 2 or 300,000 livres to repair them, which was equal to their former value." However serious this misfortune might be, the marine committee declared, two decades after, that in every quarter still greater damages might be soon expected to take place; and the following extract from his report may give some idea of the universal ruin of all those monuments of human industry, whose number and magnificence were once the admiration of every traveller; "For some years past all the ports and harbours, whether commercial or warlike, *have been choking up*; the quays are *giving way*; the light-houses and buoys are successively *disappearing*; all the works intended for the safety of our navigation are daily *ceasing to exist*; the buildings belonging to civil establishments are *falling to ruins*; and even now in the year vi. no funds have yet been applied to repairs of the most urgent necessity\*."

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\* See the *Moniteur* of the 25th August 1798, No. 338,

This however is merely the state of affairs with regard to the expenses called *national*: that of the public works belonging to departments and municipalities is still more deplorable, because the deficit of the *additional fous*, which should have provided for keeping them in repair, has amounted, not merely to half, but to five sixths of their amount. Of this Fabre described the fatal consequences in a long series of confessions, which the urgency of affairs extorted from him on the 14th August 1798; when the taxes on consumption proposed for enabling each city to maintain its own establishments were opposed as *immoral*. "These taxes," said he, "are talked of as being *immoral*; but the disorder of the finances of the great communes, especially of that of Paris, is far more *immoral*, and produces much more deplorable consequences. The poor are in a state of the most dreadful wretchedness; the sick are not assisted, and *expire without relief on an infected bed*; the administrators, the judges, and the clerks in the public offices, receive no pay; the tutors of colleges and schoolmasters are in the greatest distress; the police is ill regulated for want of funds; the public health is impaired; the public buildings are *pulling down* for want of *the most urgent repairs*; and the national monuments are in a state of dilapidation, because there are no funds for keeping them up. Such are the facts we oppose to the charge, and this *without the least fear of being accused of exaggeration*."

Thus at length it appears, that the Directory have only been enabled to linger out in the agonies of expiring debility, by neglecting *the most urgent repairs*;

by struggling in the convulsions of perpetual bankruptcy ; by applying all the receipts exclusively to the payment of their own salaries, to those of their ministers, agents, and soldiers, and to the *indemnities* of the two Councils. How much longer, it may be asked, will they be able to prolong their existence in the midst of the victims, and the ruins, with which they are endeavouring to fill up the abyss already gaping beneath their feet? Alas ! till they are reduced to their internal resources ; and till the neighbouring powers shall no longer suffer them to subsist, from day to day, on the plunder of their dominions. However soon or however late shall be their fall, I will venture to assert, that the greatest object of wonder to future historians will be, that they have been able, without the aid of paper, to struggle during two successive campaigns against so immense a deficit, and that still their financiers seriously flatter them with the prospect of supplying it, and encourage them to prosecute the war, at the same time that they declare, *with truth*, that it is *in fact more expensive than the continental war they have waged against the whole of Europe* has proved at any time since the commencement of hostilities !

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Difference between the two Councils in their Opinions on the Cause of the Deficit, and the proper Means of filling it up. Absurdity of their Theories of Finance. Influence of the Errors of the Economists on the Disorder of the public Revenue, and on the Crimes of the Revolution.*

IT is scarcely credible, that among the immense number of revolutionary writers who have treated of the cause of the deficit, Lecouteulx, Arnould, Laufat, and Bailleul alone seem to have suspected that it arises from the impoverishment of the people ! “ The state,” says the latter of these deputies, “ consists of all the citizens, and if they are rich, the government is rich ; but if they are in misery, the state is poor. It is neither their want of inclination nor of civism that renders the collection of the taxes so difficult.

IT IS THEIR WANT OF ABILITY \*.”

All the other members of the Councils pay no attention to this diminution of *ability*, and either, with Craffous, attribute the defalcation of the revenue to the *extreme high rate of interest* ; or, with the minister

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\* It must be remarked, Bailleul does not here speak of their want of specie, but of the diminution of their income, and the depreciation of their capitals ; for he took care to add this important observation : *We must not consider gold and silver as the only capitals of a nation, Every thing that represents any kind of property is to them a CAPITAL.*

of finance, impute it to the *frauds and negligence of the collectors* \*; or, with Bruslé, declare that it arises solely from the *scarcity of money*, a popular idea, which, like many other erroneous systems, originates in mistaking the effect for the cause.

If the inhabitants of France have in fact lost half their gold and silver, it cannot be denied that this draining of specie, added to the general want of credit, is a great calamity; but we have already seen in the inventory of the capitals of France, that the loss of their gold and silver is one of the least misfortunes they have suffered by the revolution. In fact, if, as there is every reason to believe, they had no indispensable necessity for two milliards in specie for

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\* See the *Moniteur* of the 28th November 1798, No. 68, in which is a circular of Ramel, wherein he complains to the general agents of the direct contributions, that *the receipts are more and more tardy, especially since the commencement of the year VII.* That minister assures them there would be no arrears if they had not violated the confidence which the government had placed in them, and asserts, that "a great variety of intelligence has convinced him that the deficiency in the receipts is rather to be attributed to the *misapplication* of the public money, the *frauds* of the collectors, the *carelessness* of the superintendents, and the *inactivity* of the receivers, than to the unwillingness of the people to pay."

In the same dispatches Ramel endeavoured to throw farther light on the *carelessness* of the collectors, by adding, "I am informed that some of them send the *garnishers* before they serve the notice, and that others bring *executions* on the defaulter on the very day when he is selling his provisions at market to pay his taxes. Such persecutions can only arise from a perverseness of intention. I shall make a distinction between those who only pursue *legal* measures, and those who endeavour to render the government *odious*."

This circular, which points out some of the hidden causes of the deficit, and of its daily progress, may also explain the increasing depreciation of all kinds of provisions. It further explains how the *collectors* and their *garnishers* are placed in the cruel alternative of doing either too much or too little, and thus either accelerating the fall of the government by rendering it *odious* in case they act with rigour, or causing it to *languish* if they at all relax from the calls of their duty.

their pecuniary transactions, whatever exceeded the sum really necessary was an unproductive capital. We may say more : for this dead stock, on which they placed so high a value, exposed them to the same loss that an individual would suffer, who, having a sum of money unemployed, should, in lieu of laying it out in the purchase of a house or a field, keep it idle and unprofitable in his chest. In short, if it is true that before the revolution near half the specie of France was buried in coffers, or deposited in heaps with the notaries, the draining of this half has not been more prejudicial to the country than an epidemic disorder that should have carried off cattle to an equal value. In fact, it has been a smaller evil, for the cattle would have multiplied, whereas gold and silver thus locked up produce nothing, and are of no use except as merchandise; or as a measure to appreciate the various objects of barter, and a circulating medium to pay for them. All that part of the specie of a country which is not so employed is to the inhabitants an absolutely dead stock.

Since the time when the celebrated Mr. Locke laid it down as a maxim, that *gold* and *silver* constitute the *riches* of a state, this idea has been so generally adopted, that, to compare the relative opulence of two states, many begin by computing the amount of their specie; and this mode of judging has even been admitted by the majority of intelligent merchants. But were these merchants asked, whether they would take that as a criterion of the comparative riches of any two of their correspondents, they would reply, that nothing could be so erroneous a guide; that skilful

merchants never keep more money by them than is absolutely necessary for their daily transactions, and the payment of their acceptances; and that all the money they have by them more than they have occasion for, exposes them to an unnecessary sacrifice. In a word, they will reply, that it is of much less importance to know how many écus or guineas they have in specie, than to know the contents of their warehouses, the number of their ships, their debts and credits, and all their other species of property; and that after thus forming an idea of the true state of their affairs, we need not be surprised if the one should prove ten times as rich as the other, although perhaps he may not have one tenth as much ready money.

This example is perhaps the best illustration of the true measure whereby to appreciate the riches of nations; but as almost all the ministers of the old French government had, as it were, only studied the progress of the national opulence by the quantity of specie in France at different periods, or the bullion they carried to the mint, we ought not to be surprised if the present governors, after having exhausted their own riches, attribute the impoverished state of the country merely to the absence of the precious metals.

If I take a third method of opposing that error, this proceeds from my considering it as the most deeply implanted of all those into which the French government had fallen, and because, while we are tracing back the causes and the history of the malady that is destroying that unhappy country, it is of importance that we should not deceive ourselves, either with



respect to the symptoms, or the true seat and nature of her disease.

The same man (Bailleul) who has lately acknowledged that the scarcity of money is not the true cause of the evil, has pointed out as a remedy the strange measure of a *sinking fund*. Those who are at all acquainted with the nature of this sort of fund, know, that, in lieu of filling up a *deficit*, it would imply, on the contrary, an actual and permanent *surplus* in the revenue. This probably Bailleul himself at length perceived; for after twice recurring to that expedient, he abandoned it, and confined himself to demanding that the treasury should, without delay, pay the stockholders the interest of their *consolidated third*. This motion may perhaps, at first sight, appear equally foolish with the other: but it is evident the creditors of the state cannot pay their taxes and contributions unless they receive their dividends from the state.

It would be useless to dilate any further on the extravagances of certain orators, who pretended to doubt the existence of a deficit, merely to authorize themselves to refuse farther subsidies. The scenes that have taken place on this subject in the two Councils throughout the year vi. have so strong a resemblance to those in which the unfortunate Gilbert took so large a share, that the accounts of them seem to be a mere copy of the debates of the year v. On the one hand, several of those who succeeded him in the tribune, have like him said, that *the best tax, and the most agreeable to the people, is, ECONOMY; that it is in fact the principal branch of the public revenue* \*; and that they

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\* Marquess, on the 3d October 1798.

are only its stewards, not the proprietors and sovereign *dispensers* of it. On the other, the Directory have resumed their former conduct, and denounced to all true republicans the *hydra of conspiracy*, who is continually rising anew to impede the re-organization of the finances. They have even covered the walls of Paris with *placards*, accusing those who refuse the supplies, of wishing to *assassinate* the republic, and give it a *mortal blow*. This was repeating, word for word, the accusation which had a year before caused the party of Pichegru to be transported to Cayenne; and the Directory would doubtless have disencumbered themselves in the same manner of their new opponents, had they not learned, by dear-bought experience, that decrees of transportation are far from being productive to the national treasury. Another point of similarity between these two epochas is, that the party accused, in like manner, not of *royalism* but of *anarchy*, have drawn new motives of opposition from these very reproaches\*." "I know," said Bi-

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\* As these placards highly irritated the party against whom they were directed, and who feared that they should appear intimidated and cowardly if they acceded to the additional taxes, the new committee appointed to propose them made use of the following turn to obliterate the memory of all these insults: "Citizens, there is not one of you who is not strongly impressed with the *liberticide manœuvres of some vile pamphleteers in the pay of the English government*, and the indecent hand-bills with which the walls of Paris are covered by the hand of *malevolence*. The authors of these *infamous* writings have doubtless some very perfidious views, since they endeavour to cause a division between the executive and the legislative powers, and to make the nation believe that a part of their representatives are not willing to supply the Directory with the means of supporting the sacred cause of Liberty, and rendering her triumphant."

Thus spoke Destrem on the 7th October; and a few days after he had thus attributed these *liberticide manœuvres* to the English government, the Directorial gazette, which has never been accused of being in the

gonnet, on the 24th August 1798, " that malevolence is lying in wait to attribute to us *criminal* intentions. Have not the sovereign magistracy of the *libellous placards* already accused those who do not acknowledge that an *increase of taxes* is just and salutary? Let us rise above this new *terror* which it is attempted to strike into the minds of the legislators. Let us be bold to discuss the interests of the people."

Lucien Buonaparte had already anticipated this orator, having several days before pointed out a *mezzo termino*, which, he said, would supersede the necessity of an *increase of taxes*, and afford the government all the resources they required. The reader will imagine, perhaps, that the measure he was about to propose was *peace*. By no means. His brilliant discovery was confined to stopping the progress of the plunder and immoralities of which he accused the army-contractors. According to him all that was to be done was, to put a stop to the oppressive and exorbitant terms imposed by them on the ministers. Wonderful to relate! this statesman had sufficient weight with the Council of Five Hundred to induce them seriously to debate whether these exorbitant terms were the true cause of the deficit, or whether the deficit had rendered these contracts oppressive and exorbitant; a question which the logical orator Génissieux decided in a luminous manner by

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pay of Mr. Pitt, copied and amplified all these *infamous writings and contemptible hand-bills*.—" Some men there are," said the *Redacteur* of the 9th September, " who seem to make a point of disputing every inch of the financial ground, and of deferring or neutralizing the resources of the country."

the following observation : “ Those who say that the terms of the contractors are exorbitant because the treasury is empty, take the *major* for the *minor*. We ought rather to say, that the public treasury is empty because the terms of the contracts are exorbitant.” This observation was so conclusive, that a thundering decree against the contractors was about to be passed to make them refund their unjust gain; when the debate was interrupted by intelligence, that, merely upon the motion of Lucien Buonaparte, they had taken to flight, and that their retreat put the government in abeyance\*.

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\* L. Buonaparte had boasted in the outset of the denunciation he was preparing against the robberies of the contractors, that he would call forth *the cold sweat of criminality on the brow of more than one criminal*. This boasting however called forth *cold sweat* on no man's brow except that of the unfortunate Ramel, who trembled at the idea of being deserted by the few contractors then in his employ. Hence he lost no time in endeavouring immediately to avert the menaced blow which impended over himself as well as the contractors, and therefore published, or caused to be published, in the Directorial gazettes of the 2d and 9th September, two violent invectives against the motion of Lucien Buonaparte. In these papers, without attempting to conceal or deny the exorbitant terms of the contracts complained of, they were justified by *the imperious law of necessity*, while this was attributed to the obstinate refusal of the taxes; and lastly, to this refusal was imputed the retreat of the most honest of the contractors.

Ramel however did not confine himself to these recriminations; but had recourse to the fertile pen of Saint-Aubin, who, in his apology for this minister and his contractors, began with great shrewdness by observing, that *it is very pleasant to hear those raise a hue and cry of Stop thief! who do not pay their lawful and acknowledged debts which they have themselves contracted*; and that if we would with ministers to be economists, or make advantageous bargains, it is not enough to decree *so many millions* for such an article of expenditure, and *so many* for another; for, added he, *these decrees costing nothing but pen, ink, and paper, it would be as easy to decree an equal number of milliards, and that without being either richer or poorer*.

It must be confessed that the explanation of Saint-Aubin is a pretty good defence both of the treasury, which Génissieux and Chabert had called *the head-quarters of the army of swindlers*, and of the war department, which Chabert reproached with paying its contractors

Another member, however, ventured to return to the charge. "In lieu," said he, "of continually proposing new taxes, let us rather study to have less need of them, by practising in each branch of the public expenditure every species of economy of which it is susceptible." Thus spoke Marquezy on the 3d October; and if he made less impression on the Council than Lucien Buonaparte, it was because he had, the wisdom shall I call it, or the folly, to invite his colleagues to add example to precept, by renouncing the *additional* indemnity they had just decreed into their own pockets, amounting to no less a sum than 2,900,000 livres *per annum* \*. As they

*at least 30 per cent. above the real value. But Chabert also complained on the 6th August, that all the contracts are fictitious and scandalous; and that they are cancelled to give them to new creatures. Yet neither the treasury, the Directorial gazette, nor Saint-Aubin, have attempted to justify this duplicity in cancelling the contracts.*

\* "Since it is necessary to make reductions and retrenchments," added this deputy, "*why is it not proposed to rescind the resolution, which, in the distressed circumstances in which we are placed, has aggrieved the public treasury by granting you an additional indemnity of 333 livres per month?*"

To answer this inquiry belongs to the history of the expenditure, which would require a separate work, and would prove that the government of *equality* is, for a great nation, the most expensive of all governments. Till Admiral Villaret had, at the tribune of the Council, pronounced that assertion, *do not deceive yourselves, the throne of liberty is EXPENSIVE*, the people of France did not suspect, that the empty honour they enjoyed of annually beholding one of their *equals* exalted to the supreme magistracy, would cost them infinitely more than the English pay for the pomp of hereditary monarchy, and the maintenance of the various branches of the royal family. We may fully convince ourselves of this fact by casting our eyes over the civil list of the two Councils and of the Directory, which, however enormous it be, these pretended *economists* of the public money are ever finding new pretexts for increasing, and for dividing among themselves the last spoils of the people-king. The following is a sample of the harangue, by means of which Lecointre procured for the Directors an immediate grant of the 1,500,000 livres they demanded on the 13th July to enlarge their

perceived, however, that merely preaching *economy* was not sufficient to insure the payment of these ad-

palace: "It is time," said he, "they should have a residence corresponding with the glory they have acquired to the Great Nation. Their palace ought to be surrounded with all the most brilliant productions of the arts. Let us rescue the national dignity from this species of *sans-culotism*, into which some men have wished to plunge it by pursuing *abstract ideas*.—At this period you owe a great representation to Europe, for the eyes of all Europe are upon you."

Let it be remembered, that the period which appeared so proper for voting 1,500,000 livres for the Directory, and twice that sum to the two Councils, was the period when *a great number of the sick and indigent were dying in the hospitals*, because they could neither have *broth nor bread*; and when a few thousand écus would have repaired the dykes of Dol, and prevented an *inundation* which two months afterwards *reduced ten thousand families to wander without relief, without an asylum, and without the means of subsistence*.

Let it also be remembered, that all these new profusions, which Mercier called *truly republican*, were decreed by the Councils a few weeks after they had loaded with applause the Deputy Lacuée, who addressed them in these terms: *Before we provide for those who have served the republic, let us take care of those who compose it.*

Lastly, let it be remembered, that however often the word *economy* is pronounced and re-echoed, whenever new taxes are proposed, it is scarcely ever thought of when the expenditure is voted. On the 6th November 1797, a member having in this manner opposed some revolutionary project supported by Dufay, he was immediately silenced by the latter, who cried out, "*ECONOMY! it is a miserable idea! A little money is nothing in competition with supporting the national dignity. In fact, it is economy to spend money with judgment; economy is but a secondary object when the matter in discussion is public order.*"

Dufay was not, however, the only member who held this language; for, on nearly a similar occasion, his colleague Eudes insisted, that *economy ought not to degenerate into a trifling parsimony, unworthy of the first nation in the world*. On the 15th June, Couturier, equally impressed with the advantage of representing such a people, moved that "no salary to an ambassador, envoy, or other servant of the government, could exceed that of the deputies." It might be imagined, perhaps, that the object of this motion was to reduce the salaries of ambassadors: far from it; the true object was to raise to that level those of the members of both Councils, who thus allowed themselves an additional *indemnity* for the expenses of lodging, of the senatorial dress, and of a secretary. No sooner had the legislative body gained this point, than they passed to the order of the day on the motion relative to the ambassadors, or, at least, the business ended with a message from the Directory, pointing out the impropriety "of placing them between penury and seduction, or of ren-

ditional salaries, and that it was necessary to provide new funds from which they might be supplied, they at length proceeded to the discussion of the most eligible indirect taxes, to supply the deficiency of the direct.

They consented, though not without considerable difficulty and opposition, to re-establish the *droits d'octroi*, or duties on provisions brought into Paris, which they decorated with the splendid name of *octroi de bienfaisance*. But as their produce is appropriated to the local expenses of the department, and not to that of the *nation* at large, which was the object in contemplation, the committee of finances ventured, at length, to pronounce the word *salt-duty*, which they frankly declared to be the only truly productive financial resource.

This was the signal of alarm for the most violent enemies of the old government, among whom Bigonnet, in particular, stated a dilemma which certainly has considerable force, and which has been constantly adduced whenever it has been in agitation to revive any of the old taxes. *Either*, said he, *the taxes to be re-established are UNJUST, or the revolution which abolished them was itself an act of INJUSTICE*. Couturier added, that they were *so many steps towards restoring the old government*; and another member agreed, "that they would inevitably give birth to

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dering it impossible to offer those foreign missions to men of known probity, intelligence, and *civisme*." Scarcely was the reading of this message concluded, when Destrem, the reporter of the committee of finances, supported it by declaring, "that every agent in foreign parts ought to have a salary consistent with the character of a representative of the *Great Nation*, and calculated to preserve a medium between ostentatious pomp and *degrading obscurity*."

*dangerous comparisons*; and that the enemies of the republic would infallibly point these out to the people."

In answer to this, Riou adduced an argument no less candid than instructive. "There is one dangerous prejudice," replied he, "very important to be destroyed; that of imagining that the object of the revolution was to *destroy* the indirect taxes. On the contrary, it appears to me that the indirect taxes were abolished to *facilitate* the revolution. The monarch then upon the throne was to be overturned, and therefore the channels were to be cut off by which that gold which enabled him to maintain his power flowed into his coffers. Hence, if to abolish royalty we repealed the taxes by which the royal treasury was supplied, we ought surely to *conclude*, that to support the republican government we must take an opposite line of conduct." This *conclusion* would have been tolerably just, if, at the same time, when he confessed that the *revolution had been facilitated by abolishing* the taxes, Riou could have warranted, that the *revival* of them would not *facilitate a counter-revolution*; or had he been able to refute the assertion of Groscaftland, that *the suppression of the tax on salt had made as many REPUBLICANS as its re-establishment would make malecontents*. This was the rock which another member immediately pointed out in other terms. "Does then the *republic* consist, with regard to the people, in an *empty word*, or an *abstract theory*? No; it consists *wholly* in the nature of taxation, in its moderation, the justice of its assessment and distribution, and in the advantages, the protection, and



the security it procures for the lower classes of society \*." This was clearly acknowledging, that if the burden of the new taxes be equal to that of the old, it is of little consequence to the lower classes whether they pay them into a *royal* or a *republican* treasury; and that if this last term is not a protection against taxes, it is to them a word totally destitute of meaning. Whence it appears, that the true question which was then, and long will be, under discussion in both the Councils, and which will long remain undecided, is the choice of the alternative, whether to suffer the republic to expire in a consumption through a refusal of the taxes, to the abolition of which it owed its birth, or to expose it to a violent death, by demanding these taxes of the new republicans, who consider the republic as consisting *wholly* in the certainty of being for ever delivered from their burden.

This danger decided the question; and as the salt-duty was rejected by an immense majority †, it is evi-

\* André. See the *Moniteur* of the 6th September, No. 350.

† This victory was in a great measure owing to the eloquence of Groscaudan, who conjured his colleagues not to give the enemy room to *smile* by taking a *retrograde* step; and to *remember*, that the patriots *took up arms* but to destroy the tax upon salt.

This is not, however, the only republican who now gives it out, that it was not for the destruction of the Bastille, but of the taxes, that the sovereign-people rose in arms. When Villers proposed the sale of licences for fishing in the navigable rivers and canals, Pison du Galand began a series of lamentations and confessions: "It is with great regret," said he, "that I observe almost the same institutions *reorganizing*, as those which the night of the 4th August ought to have buried in eternal oblivion. I *know* that it may be useful, and even necessary, to place in the hands of the national authority duties which we *did well then* to tear from the hands of our tyrants. I *know*, that whole ages have, as it were, intervened between us and that immortal era of our revolution; but how frequently have attempts

dent that the victorious party of the 18th Fructidor have pursued precisely the same steps with which they reproached the vanquished, and that the year vi. has passed like the year v. in visionary schemes of finance, in declamations against abuses, and in pro-

been made to bring us back to it? and ought we not, above all things, to examine whether the time is come to approximate so nearly in our measures to the *horrid usurpations of feudality*; and whether it is not extremely dangerous to let the people imagine, that we are preparing for them institutions similar to those, the destruction of which was to them a day of happiness, and *emancipation*? But the public good demands this measure!—the state of our finances imperiously demands that no delay should retard its adoption!—and *I am silent.*”

It appears then that Groscaudan broke the *silence* which this discreet member boasted of *preserving*; and that he said enough to enable us to judge of the propriety of the modest advice which Pères had a few days before addressed to the kings of Europe: “At length let them learn,” said he, “that the republic is immoveably established.—Yes, it is **INDESTRUCTIBLE**—*Its head touches the heavens, and its foundations, deeply rooted in the bowels of the earth, will brave the power of time.*—And thou, proud Albion, who obstinately persistest in preserving the empire of the seas, tremble for thy destiny; *thy last hour approaches.*” This prediction may be seen in the *Moniteur* of the 6th July, which states that the Council of Elders ordered it to be printed.

A few days after having thus voted by acclamation the *indestructibility* of the republic, when the Directory came to declare to the two Councils that it could not be *immoveably established*, but on a system of taxation calculated to *bring* the receipts and the expenditure to an *equilibrium*; and when for this purpose they proposed the re-establishment of the duties on articles of consumption; Fabre himself, who was the great promoter of it, could not help confessing, that some *shocks* must be expected on the part of the republicans.—“May not an intriguer,” he ingenuously asked, “make use of it to oppose the government, and thus *stir up the people, who are so easily irritated in all matters of finance?*”

It is unnecessary to add, that the orator easily overcame this fear, and obtained the decree for the re-establishment of the octroi, or duties on provisions brought into towns; but as they have not yet ventured to collect them, except at the barriers of Paris, where the Directory have a strong force, it remains to be seen how they will conduct themselves with those republicans of the provinces who *took up arms to destroy* the very taxes which the government are now endeavouring to revive.

mises of economy \* ; in decreeing largeesses, in lamentations on the increasing deficit, in empty boasts of the *inexhaustible resources* of France, in threats of *making a grand display of her resources*, and in obstinate refusals to decree any really productive tax that might give birth to *dangerous comparisons*. It is true, the refusing party generously offered to supply the place of the salt-duty by taxes on luxury : but Bailleul, who had been the great defender of the former, opposed, in his turn, with all the force of his oratory, every idea of exclusively taxing the rich. He maintained, “ that they have already been obliged to renounce every gratification that might betray their riches ; that they have all put on *the uniform of mediocrity*, and taken their money out of the circulation, to bury it in the earth, and escape taxation—that if such taxes are light, they produce nothing ; if they are heavy, the rich renounce their enjoyments ; and then not only the national treasury re-

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\* On the 4th November 1797, Baraillon declaimed on that topic in a very edifying speech, in which he complained of *the enormity of the expenditure* ; that it *increased every day* ; that the situation of the republic was *in opposition* with that of its finances, which had become the *tub of the Danaïds* ; that they continually proposed *pretendedly republican* institutions, which were in reality infinitely expensive ; and that *these abuses, which were devouring its vitals*, were suffered not only to subsist, but even to propagate and increase.

This speech made so strong an impression on the Council of Five Hundred, that they instantly appointed a committee of eleven members, *to present their views on economy and reform*.

After an interval of eight months, in which *no views were presented*, Savary asked, whether they had not made any *progress in their work* ; on which the Moniteur of the 20th June states, that several members cried out, *No, no ; there is nothing done*. The two Councils now conceiving themselves insulted, thought it time to undertake this duty themselves ; which they performed by voting themselves 2,900,000 livres for additional *indemnities*, and allowing the Directory 1,500,000 to enlarge their palace,

ceives nothing, but thousands of the poor languish under an increase of misery.—I am not advancing any thing," said Bailleul, "but what we have already witnessed; and I maintain, that if we do not wish to crush and destroy the working people, the tax ought to be laid on the necessaries of life, or on other equivalent objects."

This doctrine must have appeared to the partisans of equality truly *liberticidal*, and particularly strange from Bailleul \*. But it will be thought perhaps still more singular, that this converted Jacobin was overthrown the next day (the 2d October 1798) by a new opponent, named Groscauld, who only asked for four and twenty hours to answer him, and whose speech merits the most distinguished attention. "Decree a tax on domestic animals, and on those

\* Saint-Aubin constantly maintains the same theory in a series of small publications; in which he has observed with great acuteness, that all taxes on luxury, in lieu of falling exclusively on the rich, fall in reality on whole classes of working people, who manufacture or sell the articles taxed; so that, in lieu of being called *taxes on luxury*, they ought to be named *taxes on misery*.

In his indignation at the rejection of the tax on salt, he has published a work, asserting that many of his friends have declared, that they rejected it, not because it was *in itself a bad tax*, but because at the present time it appeared *impolitic, unpopular, and dangerous*.

It is not very easy to decide between Saint-Aubin and those friends whose confidence he has thus revealed; for if, as we must believe, they are *thorough republicans*, their first duty is not to support the government of the usurpers by measures which would accelerate the restoration of the lawful king. In fact, it is probable the revival of the *gabelle* would remove one of the chief barriers that opposes the re-establishment of the monarchy; and in this point of view, as well as many others, Cretet very justly observed, that *to renew the taxes of the old government was out of the power of the republic*. Hence it is natural, that the friends of Saint-Aubin should be afraid of decreeing a counter-revolution by reviving them, as the parliaments decreed the revolution by refusing to register the new taxes proposed, which were to prevent such a change by covering the deficit.

kept for pleasure, such as sporting-dogs, lap-dogs, &c.—Treble the tax on carriages hung on springs, lay a tax on plate glass, fix a *maximum* for the income of honest industry, and seize the overplus as an infallible sign of speculation. Raise a forced loan on *fortunes of colossal* size made during the revolution, the possessors of which were formerly *lackeys*, though they now take the title of *Monsieur*, and almost that of *Marquis*; thus assuming the airs of their former masters, whose estates they have seized upon.—Decree also that single men shall pay *three-times* the amount of their land-tax, poll-tax, mobiliary and sumptuary taxes.”

Bailleul knew not how to reply to this fine harangue, in which the speaker thus obstinately adhered to all the first principles of Jacobinism; whereas the former had not only gradually abandoned them, but had appealed to the events that had taken place, and called his accomplices to *witness*, that to declaim against the rich was to conspire against the middling classes, to add to the privations of the poor, and to dry up the resources of the public revenue.

We must not however be surprised, if the new committee of finances gave the palm of victory to his antagonist. Between the fear of forfeiting their popularity like the preceding committee, and the numerous messages sent them in rapid succession by the Directory, to remind them of their engagement to *raise the national receipts to a level with what is deemed the necessary expenditure*, they at length declared by Destrem their reporter, “ that the deficit requiring to be filled up for the year VII. is not 200

millions, as was pretended, but fifty-five; *that it would be provided for without recurring to a duty on salt, by resources arising from luxuries, but by no means affecting the necessities of life*; and that forty-five millions might be provided for by taxing coach gateways, windows, balconies, chimneys, carriages, and draught and saddle horses. — We *must* not," added the reporter, "lose the fruits of all the sacrifices we have made. The government *must* be enabled to silence those intriguing cabinets, who ought to have respected *the sleeping lion*."

The Council of Five Hundred were yet dilating with the first transports of joy on hearing these two interesting pieces of intelligence, and were again about to personate the sleeping lion, when Saint-Aubin thought proper to adjourn their sleep, by publishing a short work, which overthrew the magnificent apparatus we have described. He there asserted, on the authority of the minister of finance, that the deficit would be infinitely greater than was stated: he prognosticated, that the produce of these taxes on luxury would have no existence *but on paper*, and would not amount to *one tenth* of what was expected. He concluded by exposing the errors of the committee, who, in lieu of proposing *indirect* taxes, as they imagined, had brought forward nothing but a mere addition to the poll and land-tax; for the exorbitance and unproductiveness of which they were appointed to find a remedy. Thus while the deficit is on every side undermining this expiring republic, its founders are still seriously disputing about *grand principles*, about the comparative advantages of *direct*

or *indirect* taxation, and the propriety of laying them on the *rich* or on the *poor* \*. In this crowd of disputants no one seems to have suspected, that there exists not perhaps in finance one abstract truth, not one principle or maxim, but must bend to local and temporary circumstances, and is true or false in its application, according as it relates to a nation that is rich, poor, or moderately opulent, and according as it is agricultural, manufacturing, or commercial. But before they debate whether any particular tax be better or worse, more or less productive than another, they have not even thought of investigating the inconsiderable amount of the trifling superfluities which, in their present impoverished state, they can apply to the public revenue. Ten years ago they imagined, that to bring the science of finance to perfection, it was enough to commute

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\* " We are all agreed," said Marquetry, " on the fatal necessity of an increase of taxes. We only differ on the question, whether these taxes shall weigh chiefly on the *rich* or on the *poor*." This question it is not very easy to decide, if it must be answered exclusively in favour of the one or the other; and it becomes still more difficult when it is also to be determined, whether the tax ought to be *direct* or *indirect*. Hence the difference of opinions was so great, that one of the logicians of the Council gave a summary of all these debates by saying, that it appeared to him that *opinions were DIVIDED with regard to the DIRECT or INDIRECT taxation, and that they were still less agreed in their CHOICE of taxes*. We ought not therefore to be surprised, if the discussion itself having *divided the opinions* more and more, Arnould concluded by complaining to his colleagues of their *prodigious fecundity of argument on every species of tax*. Still less ought we to be surprised, if Villers endeavoured to put an end to this fecundity of argumentation on the 8th August, by saying, *It is certain there cannot exist one good tax; all are burdensome and hurtful; but, in few words, taxes are INDISPENSABLE*.

Great care was taken not to hold such language to the people at the beginning of the revolution, when, to *overturn* the monarchy, they were invited to *cut off the channels which alone furnished it with the means of keeping its ground*.

all the other taxes into one; they now proclaim, that the whole art consists in varying them: and whenever one of these empirics ascends the tribune to point out a new object of taxation, the majority of his audience imagine they have really discovered a new resource. But had they condescended to open the book of experience, they would have perceived, that the taxes which bear upon the rich in proportion to their fortune, or on the poor in proportion to their consumption, are nearly equally just and equally advantageous, provided the former are properly proportioned to the latter. They would then have learnt, that the whole art of rendering a tax productive consists in gradually habituating the people to the payment of it, so as neither to retrench too suddenly from the one what they consider as necessaries, nor from the others what they consider as their chief enjoyments; and in so laying it, as to have sufficient time to learn what methods will be employed to elude it; and also the highest point to which in time it may be raised without passing the line beyond which its produce would diminish. It is by being too precipitate in establishing new taxes that the revolutionists of France have failed in all their attempts; but having, as they imagined, taken liberty by assault, they determined also to establish their finances in the same manner. Time will show, whether, by thus exceeding all bounds in their measures of finance, they will not accelerate and facilitate the return of the lawful king, by affording him the happy prospect of suppressing some of the present taxes without incurring any diminution of his revenue, and of reducing the land-tax to less



than half its present rate, with a certainty of rendering it more productive than those who established it.

Incredible as it may appear, in the midst of these extravagant ideas Daunou, president of the Council of Five Hundred, declared with exultation, that the revolution had filled the French nation with *just ideas, caused all prejudices to vanish, and made them acquainted with their own strength.*

But even the ecstasies of this enthusiast are outdone by a speech of Arnould, wherein he congratulates his countrymen on *the great progress the science of economy has made of late years*; and, in proof of this assertion, appeals to *the fiscal opinions published by the members of both Councils.*

To give a just and complete idea of their *progress* in this comprehensive science, it may not be amiss here to mention the three great standards by which they boast of measuring, with the utmost exactness, the comparative resources of two countries, whether to support a national debt or to pay taxes: and these standards have been displayed with great pomp and ostentation by the three men who are considered at Paris as oracles in finance.

After having compared the national debt of France with that of England, not by the amount of the interest they owe, but by the nominal capitals which they do not owe, Saint-Aubin began to compare their respective burdens by their quantities of specie. "Supposing," said he, "that we had only 1600 millions in *specie*, we should only have *three écus* of debt for *one écu* in ready money; whereas in England there are above *fifteen to one.*" Not to mention that this account of

the number of écus in the two countries may be far from exact, it resembles that of a man, who, to appreciate the fortunes of two rival suitors for his daughter, should decide by the number of *guineas* each of them might happen to have in his purse, or his desk.\*.

It is true, this writer, who is a *professor in legislation*, had in reserve two other scales of comparison no less certain than the former.

One of these was a comparison of the debts of each empire with the number of square miles they contain. "France," said he, "consists of 124 millions of acres, and her debt is but forty livres *per acre*; whereas that of England amounts to 150." This, we must confess, is a most flattering mode of appreciation for some countries: Sweden, for instance, has nearly twice the extent of territory contained in France; whence it follows, that in case of need she can contract twice as great a debt, and has twice as powerful resources to support it.

The other mode was, to estimate the capital of the debt by its proportion to the respective population of the two countries; by which species of arithmetic

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\* This reasoning, however, appeared so conclusive to the writer, that he immediately drew from it the following conclusion: "It would be better," says he, "to have 24,000 livres *per annum* on the great book of the republic, than 1000*l.* sterling *per annum* in the folio volumes of the national debt of England."

It is much to be hoped, that the misfortune of Saint-Aubin may not have drawn him into any exchange of this nature; for soon after his publication the decree of bankruptcy swept off two thirds of these 24,000 livres inscribed on the great book of the republic; nor can the remaining third be sold in the market for the price of the original interest, while any one having 1000*l.* *per annum* on the folio volumes of the English national debt may receive for it eighteen or nineteen years purchase.

Saint-Aubin discovered, that 960 livres were the proportion of each Englishman, while only 160, or at most 172, fell to the lot of every Frenchman : *our individual burden therefore, concluded he, is, at most, one sixth of theirs* \*.

This new mode of striking the balance appeared to Lecouteulx so infallible, that on opening the budget of the year vi. he made use of it with the most brilliant success, to draw a comparison of the burdens the two nations would be called on to bear during the following campaign. After showing that all the contributions to be levied on thirty millions of Frenchmen only amounted to eighteen livres and a third each, including all ages and both sexes, he laid it down with the same perspicuity, that those demanded by Mr. Pitt would amount to thirty-six livres and four sous each, or *twice as much as will be paid by the French*.

Thomas Paine, who had also been turning his attention to the science of economy, took up the pen to proclaim this grand discovery, and to convince the Great Nation, which he calls the *chosen nation*, that *their extensive territory and numerous population render that burden light to them, which would crush England*. It is not, added he, *the weight of the burden, but the number of those who are to bear it, that renders it comparatively heavy or light* †.

Previous to this assertion, it was commonly ima-

\* See Rœderer's Journal, No. 21, containing the *Comparative View of the National Debts of England and France* by Saint-Aubin.

† See a work entitled, *Thomas Paine to the People of France and to their Armies, on the Revolution of the 18th Fructidor*.

gined that the *weight* of a burden was in a compound ratio of the *number* and *STRENGTH* of those *who are to bear it*: but as to the taxes, I am led to believe there are some cases wherein this weight is in a *direct* ratio to the strength of the people, but in an *inverse* ratio to their numbers. This, at least, was the opinion of Montesquieu, who said, " that a great population is sometimes one of the principal causes that oblige a wise government to demand but very light taxes; and that *wherever the necessities of the individual absorb all that is produced, little or nothing is left for the necessities of the state.*"

This is the true solution of the problem\*; for were

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\* The extravagances of Saint-Aubin, Lecoûteulx, and Thomas Paine, deserved exposition the more, because they had been broached and adopted long before the revolution, and have been constantly brought forward with new success whenever it was intended to persuade the people of France that Great Britain was on the eve of bankruptcy. The constant expectation of this bankruptcy, in which they have been as constantly disappointed, has contributed more than is generally imagined to the prolongation of the three last wars, if it has not given birth to them. It is now four years since I took up the pen to warn the French nation against the false ideas that are circulated among them relative to the finances of England; and I then felt so strongly the necessity of placing these historical facts before them, that I even commenced a complete history of British finances; in which I was encouraged by the idea, that many of the governments on the continent might derive from it very useful lessons, and find in it the model for the best system of finance that has yet existed. I had even sent the first volume of this work to the press; but I soon perceived that the task was as yet above my strength.

Those of the French who are desirous of acquiring some elementary ideas on British finances, should read an *Essay on Circulation and on Credit*, published thirty-seven years ago by a Jew named Pinto. For although it is, as the title imports, merely an essay, it is the best work existing on that comprehensive subject; and what particularly struck me, is, that the author undertook this treatise in 1761 with the same view that induced me to resume it. He wished to enlighten the people of France, who are totally ignorant, says he, of the resources of England. He reproaches the writers of the former with having misled that nation on a subject on which it is extremely important to

the taxable income of the French and English nations precisely the same, were the same taxes imposed, and should the one be twice as populous as the other, the former must unavoidably reserve twice as large a proportion of their incomes for the *wants of the people themselves* previous to providing for those of the *state*. If therefore, notwithstanding the institution of garnishers, the French nation have not been able to devote to their public expenditure a third part of what they formerly appropriated to that object, we may justly infer that all, or nearly all, their income is *absorbed by the necessities of the people* \*.

Their impoverishment is doubtless the principal cause; but there is also another which must have more or less contributed to produce this immense deficit; I mean the abolition of all the taxes to which the nation had been accustomed, and which the economists persisted in utterly destroying, that they

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*them to be well informed. They lightly believe what they ardently wish, and imagining England to be destitute of resources notwithstanding her great successes, flatter themselves from day to day with an approaching bankruptcy, which would throw the whole country into confusion. I HAVE MADE IT APPEAR, adds Pinto, THAT THIS IS A MERE ILLUSION.*

Here, however, the Jew was himself deceived. The *illusion* still continues, and we may be certain it will only be dispelled to arise anew whenever a new war shall break out.

\* Laussat has at length had the candour to admit the truth of this inference, and had even the courage to proclaim it from the tribune. In giving their report, however, of this speech, the editors of the *Moniteur* have thought proper to alter the most delicate part of it. But the deputy wrote to them on the following day (28th December 1798), insisting, "that it would be supremely unjust and vicious to determine the general contribution rigorously in proportion to the *population*. It is in this point of view," added he, "that I have maintained, that a tax which is a part taken from the superfluous income of individuals, and appropriated to the revenue of the state, must *necessarily be small* in a country, however populous, if, *owing to PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES, a great part of that population are possessed only of the ABSOLUTE NECESSARIES of life.*

might have the glory of raising another political edifice upon foundations entirely new.

Admitting, for a moment, that it would have been wise to confine taxation to land, it would have required infinite management and precaution to prepare the farmers, land-owners, and consumers, for such a measure; and, as Mr. Gentz has very judiciously observed, when speaking of the danger of introducing new modes of taxation, "when the established proportions and distributions of the taxes are suddenly changed, the people will often resist a tax which, though in fact lighter than that for which it is substituted, appears to them much more oppressive. Such a change ought to be effected by degrees, for by degrees the people were habituated to the established tax \*."

I am free to confess, that I, in some measure, impute to the economists the expropriations that have ruined France, and thrown it into confusion. Not that I accuse them of foreseeing the consequences of their system, and still less of wishing for such calamities; but I maintain, that this rash attempt suddenly to metamorphose every thing, as it were, with the stroke of a magic wand, has driven the government, whom they thus left destitute of legitimate ways and means, to the criminal resources they have adopted †. Thus were they obliged to recur to the

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\* See *Schreiben an Se. Majestät den König von Preussen Friedrich Wilhelm III. bey seiner Thronbesteigung, vom Kriegsrath Fr. Gentz, 1797.*

† Lecouteulx maintains precisely the same opinion in the work already quoted: "Never," says he, "would a system of terror have given birth either to *maximums* or requisitions; perhaps it would not even have existed, had those who were then at the helm thought it

spoliation of the clergy, which was succeeded by the invention of assignats, and these furnished the means of realizing the lands of the clergy immediately after their seizure. The next step was to persecute the rich, and thus compel them to emigrate. Soon after, they confiscated the lands even of those who did not emigrate; till at length they found the shortest way was to carry them in crowds, and by cart-loads, to the *Place de la Revolution*, there (if we may adopt their too-expressive phrase) to *coin money (battre monnaie)*. Yes, I repeat, that the cause of this original inundation of crimes was the dereliction of the old system of taxation, the popular war declared against it during twenty years by the economists, and the triumph they obtained over it in 1790. This was the motive of the Deputy F. Harmand accusing them of having *wielded the falchion of experiment among the people, as they would cut a block of marble, without regretting the waste*. This too was the cause of that exclamation of Pastoret, which his countrymen will repeat for a long period of years to come: "The empire of the passions is active and turbulent, the progress of reason slow and tardy. A single moment is enough for the fiends of destruction to complete their work, but it requires a long succession of years to repair the evils with which they infest the earth."

F. Harmand, on the 4th June 1797, when considering the evils inflicted on his country by the eco-

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possible to find sufficient resources to answer the national exigencies by means of public credit, or a good system of finance."

The decrees of the economists were so speedily successful in annihilating the public revenue, that the receipts for the year 1790 did not exceed 250 millions.

nomists, made such important confessions, and delivered such salutary and well-expressed advice, that I consider it a duty to transcribe it here, for the instruction of those nations whom his countrymen are still endeavouring to stir up, by promising to rescue them from the taxes of which they complain.

“ If those who follow after revolutions, those who contemplate them from afar, and those who *prepare* the way for them, knew how much it costs the human race to destroy even an *oppressive* government, and establish a new one, the partisans of *innovation* would be far less numerous; and if they thought it their duty to propose a salutary reform, they would at least avoid a thoughtless precipitation, and would wait till time, persuasion, and the natural progress of human affairs, spontaneously cause those abuses to cease, which strike their view and shock their feelings.”

What an important confession from a member of that assembly, which is continually preaching, even to the English themselves, the necessity of destroying their government, and calumniating it as *oppressive*, and have voted the *thanks of humanity* to the hords of plunderers they have sent into Switzerland and Ireland, armed with fire and sword, to vomit forth the poison of their hell-born revolution \* !

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\* On the 15th July the Deputy Dr. Cabanis proclaimed, that Ireland had set another great and virtuous example; and that *she deserved well of the human race, whose cause she had served*. It was while thus founding a *Te Deum* on the success of the Irish insurgents, that this physician reproached his colleagues with having till then formed a very erroneous idea of the talents of Mr. Pitt: “ *His ridiculous celebrity, said he, is far more the work of his enemies than of his partisans or flatterers.*”



We must not forget that these candid confessions were extorted from Harmànd merely by the complete disorganization of the finances, which he already clearly foresaw, and of which he openly accused the economists. Neither must we forget, that long before this credulous nation had permitted that sect to make the bold experiment of all their extravagant theories, the great Frederick had denounced them as one of the greatest scourges that could threaten mankind. It is well known, that while amusing himself with the paradoxes of these sophists, and their wild theories, their pretended admirer called them *presumptuous cynics*, who never acknowledge their errors. He even proposed, in one of his writings, that they should be made *governors* of whatever provinces deserved to be punished and *chastised*. “When they had accomplished the total subversion,” says the monarch, “of every establishment, they would at length learn, by dear-bought experience, that they are mere *ignoramuses*; that, although it is easy to criticize others, it is often difficult to excel them; and that men run a risk of talking nonsense, whenever they interfere in matters they do not understand\*.”

I am not here inquiring whether the French nation deserved to be *chastised* as severely as they have been; but if it is a great calamity for a nation to behold

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To learn what this *virtuous example* was which those had given, to whom Dr. Cabanis caused the *thanks of the human race* to be voted, we have only to refer to the *Moniteur* of the 8th October, containing the following proclamation of General Napper Tandy, whom the Directory had sent into Ireland at the head of these heroes of humanity: *Irishmen, listen to no proposals of accommodation. War, eternal war, a war of extermination to your oppressors!*

\* Dialogues of the Dead.

the sources of their revenue dried up, while, at the same time, their expenditure is increased, the reader can have as yet but a very inadequate idea of the labyrinth of difficulties to which France is at this day reduced. In short, it was merely to avoid embarrassing the subject, that, while exposing the falsehoods of their present administrators of finance, I have hitherto apparently conceded to them, that the annual expenditure did not exceed 600 or 616 millions. That of the present year will be more than double this sum; and we shall prove, by official papers, that the Directory propose to levy contributions on their subjects to an amount exceeding their net and taxable income. Nor can we, till the whole of this picture is unfolded, judge whether it is true that *the resources of the republic are entire*; whether it is true that their POVERTY is a mere chimera of the imagination of the coalesced powers, as has been said in the Councils; or whether we ought to believe the following passage of the report of Bailleul: "Let not the brilliant spectacle of our armies, of our victories, and of the admiration of surrounding nations, any longer divert our attention from the INTERNAL LANGUOR *that undermines the empire. The diminution of the resources of the state advances in the same proportion as the augmentation of its wants.*"

## CHAPTER IX.

*Investigation of all the Contributions demanded of the Inhabitants of France during the Year VII. Examination of the five Resources which their Leaders are supposed to possess to answer their Disbursements—National Domains; Paper Circulation; Loans; Gratuitous Donations; and Taxes on Luxury. The Usurpers discover the Insufficiency of each of these Resources, and the imminent Danger of the Republic perishing by the Finances.*

THE Frenchman who had the courage to upbraid the leaders of his country with having exhausted *every species of falsehood*, was strangely deceived; for the imposture which has been most successful, both at home and abroad, is that of their last estimates, wherein they boast of having reduced the expenditure of the current year so as to be able to discharge it with 600 millions. I shall prove that twice that sum is indispensably necessary, and shall point out the stratagems they have used to disguise the extent of the contributions they demand of the people.

In the first place, in their estimate of 600 millions to be produced by the land and mobiliary\* taxes, they never included the *additional sows*, which amount to seventy millions†. They would even exceed 100

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\* The mobiliary tax is intended as a tax on income, assessed, however erroneously, by the expense incurred for lodging. T.

† This is the amount at which Lecouteux estimated them. Although, according to the first decrees, the quota of these *additional sows* reserved for the *departmental, municipal, and local expenses*, ought

if we add the *droits d'octroi*, which have already begun to be collected at the gates of Paris, and which most of the great towns are about to revive for their local expenses.

In the second place, the *arrears* of taxes, the payment of which is exacted at the same time with those of the current year, exceed, as we have seen, 300 millions. Why then do they stand as only twenty-two millions and a half in the budget, according to which they appear to levy on the people this year only 600 millions? In fact, this arises from the arrears of taxes being destined to answer the *arrears* of expenditure, and because, appearing to be the least doubtful of the future receipts, almost the whole of them have been either mortgaged to the army-contractors, or promised to others in discharge of their services for the last year \*. As, after having thus dif-

not to have amounted to so large a proportion, it has considerably exceeded it with regard to some communes and some individuals; nor was any attempt made to put a stop to this new mode of extortion till Chaffiron denounced it on the 2d June 1797 in these terms: "The arbitrary extension of the *additional sous* is such, that, in some communes, this ACCESSORY tax is equal to the PRINCIPAL."

\* Article VII. of the decree which sanctioned the new budget, enacts that "The *arrears* of the taxes of all kinds, and the debts owing to the treasury, after deducting the twenty-two millions and a half included in the receipts of the year VII. shall be applied to the payment of the *arrears* of expenditure."

Should this promise be adhered to, and should the accounts of the army-contractors be actually paid, it will be the first time; for at the end of the year v. those among them who had the folly to trust the government to the amount of near 200 millions were paid in *mandats*, which then lost ninety *per cent*. The following year they thought themselves secure from the same treatment, by receiving orders on the departmental treasuries for about 100 millions of *ordonnances*, which they were enjoined by a decree to bring to the treasury, where they have been changed into inscriptions, and these are now at a discount of ninety-five and even ninety-six *per cent*. In the present year the government have again endeavoured to reconcile them to

posed of it by anticipation, there remain only twenty-two millions and a half for the service of the current year ; it is true they could not introduce them into the accounts against the 600 millions required for the future expenditure ; but in the mean while the nation, on whom these 600 millions are to be raised, is called on to pay 300 more ; for the *arrears* of the former years, which, with the additional *fous* and the *droits d'octroi*, make their burdens for the year VII. amount to a *milliard*.

To this must be added, that we are not here speaking of the *net revenue*, deducting the expenses of collection, of which no mention is ever made in the budgets. If therefore we consider that there are certain branches of public revenue, such as the customs and barrier duties, the collection of which costs above half their gross amount, it is scarcely possible to estimate the expenses of collecting the milliard above mentioned at less than 100 millions. Nor indeed would these 1100 millions satisfy the Directory, who, when announcing on the 5th day of the year VII. that the public exigencies *called for extraordinary resources to be brought forward with speed*, demanded 125 millions to provide for them. Hence it appears, that twice as much must be levied on this exhausted nation as they paid to Lewis XVI. in the time

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these orders on the treasury, by changing their name to *letters of credit* on the *presumptive receipts*. We shall see whether they will not find some new expedient for withdrawing these, which would then expose the service to a wholly insurmountable difficulty : for the minister of finances does not pretend to deny that a third attempt of this nature would put all the contractors to flight, and then no one would supply the service but for ready money.

of their greatest prosperity, and as much as the whole of their net and taxable income amounts to, even comprehending that of the additional departments.

However tedious these details may appear, it was necessary to go thus far into them, not only to give an idea of the deficit of the current year, but to prevent the public from becoming the dupe of the controversy with which the minister and committee of finances have lately amused them, by disputing, with an affected warmth, whether this deficit ought to be appreciated beforehand at 200 millions, at 104, or only at 55 \*.

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\* This farce was played off in the following manner: Bailleul having announced that the deficit of the current year would amount to 200 millions, the new committee appointed to fill it up only provided for three quarters of it, assuring the Councils that Bailleul had committed a great error, and that they could declare as a CERTAIN fact, that they had already discharged their duty by ENSURING the receipt of 545 millions.

Scarcely had they assured them of this consoling certainty, when the minister Ramel, in his turn, published a letter in the public papers, asserting, that his *deductions differed* from those of the committee, reproaching them for the omission of several items, and calculating, with scrupulous exactness, that the deficit to be provided for amounted to 104,800,000 livres; and that no one might at all doubt his sincerity, he concluded with these words: "Both our external and internal enemies are well acquainted with the situation of our finances. I should but serve their cause by *disguising* the truth, and I am studying the advantage of the republic by publishing this *true statement*." Certainly it is precisely because their external enemies are acquainted with this true statement that they may defy the minister to levy within the country 230 or 240 millions within the current year. The receipt of that sum would then leave a void of 8 or 900 millions for the domestic necessities acknowledged to be indispensable, even admitting that Holland, the right bank of the Rhine, and Italy, continue to provide for the pay and maintenance of two thirds of the armies of the republic.

Such are the various pleadings of these parties; nor is it a small matter to unravel the intricacies of a deficit after French financiers have attempted either to illustrate or confuse it.

The Directory however have contributed to illustrate this subject in their message of the 15th December 1798, in which they declare,

And as some politicians, without taking the trouble to examine the amount, persist in imagining, that, however great the deficit may be, the French still have five grand resources for discharging it, namely, the confiscated estates yet unfold ; new modes of paper circulation ; loans ; voluntary subscriptions ; and taxes on luxury—it is important to take a separate view of each.

#### NATIONAL DOMAINS.

The decree which ordered the complement of the regiments to be filled up by a levy of 200,000 men,

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*that the receipts become more and more insufficient for the various branches of the public service, and that it is indispensably necessary to discover new sources of revenue. Your laws, said they, have enacted that in the year VII. there shall be an expenditure of 725 millions ; but these laws would be mere ILLUSIONS, if additional decrees do not organize, with an evident efficaciousness, INFALLIBLE RESOURCES for bringing in an equal sum within an equal space of time.*

It is necessary to observe that this message was intended to be kept secret, and that the government did not publish it till they had proofs that it had no weight with the Councils. Nor was it inserted in the *Moniteur* till the 30th December, when it was introduced by the following preface : “ No : the necessities of the state never were more urgent, or the resources more remote. Legislators, adjourn every other question. The finances—the finances—’tis in the finances that the safety of our country resides.”

This declaration appears to me no less instructive to the neighbours of this military republic than to its legislators. Even should I be accused of being biased by a particular system, I maintain that the great question of war and peace is wholly concentrated in this : *Can the usurpers of France levy on that exhausted nation a revenue equal to the expenditure of a peace establishment ?* If I succeed in demonstrating that this is impossible, it follows that war is absolutely necessary to their existence. Thus does the fate of Europe depend on the magnitude of the deficit the Directory have to encounter. They are continually telling the two Councils that the investigation of the finances ought to be constantly the order of the day ; and it is only by the closest study of the French finances that the northern princes can appreciate their danger, or the means of safety which alone remain for them to adopt.

was followed by another, the object of which was to furnish the government with the means of equipping and maintaining these new recruits, and which authorized them to raise 125 millions in *specie* on the sale of the national property. Such was the decree; and I shall offer a few observations on it, to show that it can only be put in force upon paper.

And, 1st. When the Directory demanded these 125 millions, they at the same time cast their eyes on the national forests: but *at the very moment* when the Councils received their message, they declared these forests *inalienable*, and authorized them to make the best use they could of the rest of the national domains which had been mortgaged, first to the armies, then to the holders of assignats, then to the holders of mandates, then to the hospitals, and finally to the creditors of the state.

2d. The only mode of appreciating the pecuniary value of the national domains given up to these last, and since taken from them, is to recur to the account of the presumptive receipts of the year VII. in which the net revenue of all the domains, then unfold, was estimated at twenty millions.

3d. Not only it is evident from the last debate, that this estimate had been swelled to *above* half as much again as the real amount, but the documents furnished by the minister of finances prove, that during the interval between the total abandonment of these domains, and the resuming those which had not yet been alienated, 20,307 sales had taken place, and had thus reduced to about five millions the rent which had before been estimated at twenty.



4th. A few weeks before the remainder of these unalienated domains were thus restored to the Directory, the committee of finance declared that no more purchasers offered, and recommended putting a stop to any further sales; adding the following observation: "We are perfectly informed, and it is impossible to deny, that one of the causes of *depreciation* at the sales is the scarcity of specie. In the Vendée and in Belgium, these sales have been pushed so far, that *the purses of the buyers* are for the present empty. The produce of the harvest has not yet been converted into money; and hence arises a double evil, since the sales interfere with the receipts of the taxes, and the receipts of the taxes prejudice the sales."—This candid report is sufficient to convince us, that, even should the Directory draw a few millions from this source, they will receive so much less on account of the taxes; and thus the 125 millions they had demanded *at the moment, suddenly to fill up the complements of the regiments*, and which were assigned them on the refuse of the unsold national property, are a mere assignment on paper, a mere imaginary subsidy.

5th. This prospect is so much the more remote, as, by again transferring to the Directory the property of all these domains, the revenue of which now amounts at most to five millions, the reporter took particular care to observe, that the idea of selling them for ready money being totally *inadmissible*, they must necessarily consent to the buyers paying the purchase-money in twelve obligations payable every three months. He added, "that it could not be concealed that the sale of these obligations would cause *considerable losses*;

but that the army-contractors would prefer them, to the *uncertainty and delays of the receipts of the treasury.*" Whence it appears that the accoutrements, or at least the pay of the 200,000 men now levying, depend on the possibility of *negotiating* these obligations at long dates.

6th. As almost the whole of the unfold lands are situated in the Low Countries, where the peasantry have risen in a mass to oppose those who were taking from them their only *sons*, and completing the *ejection* of the clergy; the insurrection of this second Vendée must be quelled before the few *purchasers* can be found who have hitherto attended the sales, although their purses were for the present *empty*. But this is not all. In lieu of being able to raise recruits by these means, the Directory find themselves forced to station in the barracks of that country a part of those they raise elsewhere, and which they destined to *dictate* the terms of peace at London and Vienna.

We may now therefore calculate the proximate and probable produce of this generous subsidy, which the two Councils voted by acclamation when they received the message in which the Directory thus addressed those bodies, and the whole of Europe: "Speak but a *word*, citizens representatives, and these legions will spring up from the earth at your command. To you this PRODIGY is EASY—*Europe ought to learn* that the French republic can yet bear an extraordinary crisis, without any necessity for the legislative body to create any new taxes. The same resources that have created ought to consolidate the republic. The national domains still afford such, as

exceed the exigency of our situation. It will be *easy* for you to provide, out of the unfold domains, the 125 millions wanted," &c.

The *prodigy* of revoking the fourth species of *irrevocable* contracts to which the confiscated estates have given birth, appearing equally *easy* to the legislators of France, one of them was unable to restrain his joy. "Machiavelic government of England," exclaimed he, "*thy last hour is come*. Thou art about to receive the just reward of thy crimes. *Tremble*, for our armies are about to *march* \*."—"Our enemies shall know," exclaimed another member, exulting in the resource afforded by the unfold and unfaleable national domains, which were about to be offered to sale for the benefit of the state; "our enemies shall know that our resources are *immense*, and should we be obliged still to make several more campaigns to secure the triumph of liberty, the government will have the *means* of paying all the extraordinary expenses of the war †.

#### PAPER CIRCULATION.

The second resource the Directory is supposed to possess, whereby still to *carry on several more campaigns*, is the discovery of some fictitious sign of property, some new paper circulation, whose illusory aid might afford them the requisite time and means of *consolidating* and establishing their conquests by the same gigantic efforts to which they were indebted for

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\* Chabert.

† Destrem, on the 7th October 1798.

their acquisition. Fortunately this new species of imposture is beyond the powers of their magicians and conjurors. The charm is irremediably broken ; and if M. de Calonne were to repeat at this day that they will discover the secret of *repairing the fragility* of their work of *winding up the machine anew*, or of *substituting other circulating mediums*, it is sufficient to reply, that the *enchanted and terrific wand* has fallen from their hand, and they are at length fully convinced of the impossibility of recovering it \*. Assu-

\* Among the crowd of publications to which the singular meteor of the assignats has given birth, is one which deserves notice on account of the eccentricity of the propositions it contained. At the period when this phenomenon disappeared, a member of the House of Commons, who was a merchant of an enlightened mind, took up the pen severely to reproach the British minister with having blindly wished for the destruction of the assignats. He asserted that the enemies of France ought, on the contrary, to have encouraged and supported her system of paper circulation, because, said he, the greater the mass of these emissions, the greater would be the amount of the taxes which must be levied on the people at the return of peace to pay the interest of this floating debt. As to the idea that any other mode could have been thought of by the French, for relieving themselves from the burden, he rejected it as inconsistent with the good faith that has ever characterized republican governments. Yet scarcely had this member of the Opposition had time to publish his opinions, when the news arrived in London of the French republic having got rid of all their assignats and mandates by a decree, and of their having reduced the dividends on their other debts to one third of their amount, alleging, that having *exhausted every system of paper circulation*, and having carried on a dreadful war without the aid of any regular system of finance, no other means remained for them to resume that rank in the general opinion of mankind, to which their real strength entitled them, than that of *setting aside their public debt*. Such were the terms in which the chairman Cr  t proposed the bankruptcy, while his colleague R  gnier victoriously closed this debate by exclaiming, *Let it not be said we commit BANKRUPTCY, when, on the contrary, we do every thing in our power to act WELL.*

But notwithstanding the authority of Sir Francis Baring, the two following maxims appear to me to be completely demonstrated by the events now taking place in France :

1st, That Europe would have been saved, and her dangers terminated before the invasion of Lombardy, had the plate of the assignats

redly it would be ridiculous still to entertain any apprehensions on this subject, after what passed in the sitting of the 4th October 1798, when one of the members rendered himself the laughing-stock of the Council by endeavouring to call up the ghost of the assignats. "I must lay down," said he, "some

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been destroyed a year earlier; I mean before the immense resources which the committee of public safety derived from it, enabled them to complete the organization of the innumerable army which inundated all the neighbouring countries, and lived at their expense, when the Directory were no longer in a condition to provide for their pay with a few scraps of paper. Nor is it yet forgotten, that immediately after the fall of the assignats, the Directory boasted, and with reason, that the *armies beyond the frontiers, who were fed and nourished by their own victories, no longer employed their thoughts, except by the recital of their successes.* But into what an abyss of distress would they not then have fallen had the passes of the Alps and Appennines been defended as they ought, by a general coalition of the Italians, and had the republican armies thus been forced to employ the thoughts of the Directory by the RECITAL of their WANTS? How could the Directory have provided for these wants at the period when they complained of being reduced, through pecuniary distress, to *leave the sick soldiers in the inland hospitals destitute of medical assistance, and even of bread?*

The second truth, which at length begins to unfold itself, and which is but a consequence of the former, is, that wherever the republican armies meet with so much resistance as to be obliged to carry on the war at the expense of the republic, their enterprises fail through the *exhausted state of their finances*: that is, because it is no longer in the power of their leaders to pay the soldiers, and to victual and equip their fleets and armies, by means of paper. If Sir Francis Baring also contests this fact, he has only to cast his eyes, 1st, over the letter, which a few days previous to the destruction of the Toulon fleet, the French admiral wrote to the minister of the marine, saying, that it required considerable courage to undertake the command of a fleet so ill equipped: and 2dly, over the confession of the Directory, who attribute the failure of the third expedition against Ireland to one of the squadrons having been prevented, by the want of funds, from going out of port at the same time as the other. I do not mean to dispute that the brilliant prowess of the British navy accounts much better for that catastrophe; but why did we never hear of similar difficulties at the time of Hoche's expedition, and while the paper circulation existed? Was it not because a cart-load of assignats or mandats was sufficient to put an army in motion, or a fleet under sail?

very clear assertions. There is not a sufficiency of specie in circulation to supply the wants of commerce and pay the taxes; nor is there enough of circulating medium (*signes fictifs*) to supply that deficiency.—The money wanted by individuals costs them two or three *per cent. per month on pledges*. This exorbitant usury has *killed* the national industry by *ruining* commerce, and it will soon complete the ruin of the landholders also. —*So precarious, so anxious a situation can no longer exist.* It is necessary then to establish a system of finance; but this great and useful operation cannot take place without the creation of some new *circulating medium*.” Here Legendre (for that was the name of this new magician) represented the system of metallic specie as *dangerous*, eulogized the bank of England, and after having laid it down as a fact that it was the known source of the power of the English, and having asked why France should not have a bank still *more solid*, ventured to propose the creation of 600 millions in *notes of a national auxiliary bank, payable to bearer*. But the journal of the debates mentions, that at these words the speaker was interrupted by *murmurs*, and having raised his voice to say that these notes should have the national effects as their primary basis, the Council of Five Hundred silenced him by *new murmurs*, and passed to *the order of the day*, without one orator rising to refute or answer his harangue: such is their complete conviction, even in the midst of their infatuation, that the plate of the assignats is destroyed for ever!

Nor was it without good reason that they thus refused to listen to this alchymist; for even had they

recurred to the same resources at Paris as the French general employed at Rome, that of condemning to *two years imprisonment in irons* every one who should refuse to accept the *cédules* or notes they might issue \*, we may be assured that the day after the creation of this new bank, these 600 millions of notes would not have found a market at fix. This is so far from being in the least doubtful, that although the Council of Five Hundred entered into no debate whatever on the subject, the mere rumour of this motion immediately alarmed and put to flight the very small number of usurers who still ventured to lend their aid to government †.

It is also since that period that the Directorial gazette has declared without reserve, that "the confidence of the army-contractors has been impaired, that those who were most distinguished for their fide-

\* See the *Moniteur* of the 23d November 1798, No. 63.

† Private letters from Paris stated, that the moment when it was rumoured at the exchange that a *paper circulation* had been even named within the walls of the Council of Five Hundred, the merchants and bankers attributed Legendre's motion to Ramel, and immediately diminished their credits, which were already so short and so usurious. If this great conception really came from the minister of finance, he has suffered most by it himself, for he has since stated, that his *receipts have been diminished*. And how can we wonder at this? The people evidently continue, as much as possible, in arrears to the treasury, that they may have some means of escaping the calamity of a new paper circulation, being convinced it could only acquire a momentary currency by being received in payment of the taxes, which they would then be able to discharge in *paper* with an hundredth part of what it would now cost to discharge them in *specie*.

The financiers of France seem to consider this state of affairs as entirely new in the history of nations: but had they taken the pains to study what happened in their own country after the scheme of Law had failed, they might have seen the following passage in the writings of Forbonnois: "It is but too common to observe people unwilling to pay off their debts, in the chimerical hopes of again witnessing a similar revolution."

lity to their engagements had retired, and that if they had not expressly retracted their offers, they at least *refrained from repeating them*. They even confessed that none remained but the *mob* of those, who being willing to run the chance of delay in their payment, or even of *not being paid at all*, for some part of their contracts, know how to revenge themselves amply for the risks they foresee, by not furnishing their goods but *at exorbitant prices*."

This will be sufficient to set those at rest who had formed an idea that the Directory have discovered the secret of issuing a new species of assignats under the name of *ordonnances* and *letters of credit*. This resource is now of no use to them; for the report of Chabert having established, that all the contracts thus liquidated have been paid at the rate of at least thirty *per cent.* above their real value\*, it follows,

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\* This fact was confirmed some days after by the following passage of Bailleul's speech: "A creditor of the government receives an *ORDONNANCE*, of which the term of payment cannot possibly be fixed, but being himself indebted to others, who press him for money, he endeavours to sell, and must therefore consent to lose thirty or forty *per cent.*—In the end it is the state that pays all, and thus ruins itself, or else does not pay, and thus, by degrees, forfeits all the confidence placed in it.—Harassed by circumstances of imperious necessity, and the indigence of the treasury, the government will continue to make ruinous bargains, and to pay dearly for the instability of their promises.—And even should they obtain conditions apparently more favourable, the contractors would always expect to recover in quantity or quality, what might be lost by the delay or non-payment of their accounts."

Lecouteux has also taken up the pen to defend the ministers and army-contractors, and to show that the dearness of the bargains they make arises from the same system that has kept the public treasury empty. "When this system," said he, "once prevails, not only there is an end of all public credit, but there can be no bounds set to the disorder, the waste, and the alarming increase of the expenses which arise from this immorality, and these successive violations of justice. The contractor who sees his neighbour ruined by *delays*,



that if in payment of contracts, whose value is only 75,000 livres, the Directory issue 100,000 livres in *ordonnances*, of which the treasury has only paid three fourths, they have had all the odium of this additional failure, without deriving any advantage from it, except that of completely ruining the least distrustful of the contractors, and their other creditors, and of adding to their difficulties and want of credit. This was what induced the author of the report presented by Bailleul to say, that "the prosperity of all the branches of the political society depends on principles which cannot be infringed without leading the government into *straits, calamities, and ruin*, and the people into *misery and despair*."

Another equally instructing and encouraging fact is, that the want of confidence among the contractors took place immediately, in consequence of the infidelities exercised towards them, or rather perhaps of the poverty of the minister with whom they treat; so that for three years, during which this strange emission of successive *promises to pay* has been prolonged, it has annually diminished to one half of the preceding amount. In the year iv. Ramel issued, without difficulty, to the amount of 200 millions of *rescriptions*; but having paid these in mandates worth only 10 *per cent.* of their nominal amount, he could not in the following year place more than half that sum in *ordonnances* for

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endeavours to obtain *such* prices, and in general to take *such* precautions, that, should he experience a similar protraction of the last instalments due to him, he may nevertheless secure a profit. Another who follows him does the same, and so on, *as long as such a system lasts, though in fact IT CANNOT POSSIBLY CONTINUE ANY LENGTH OF TIME.*"

which the funds were not ready. And as these were paid in inscriptions, which are still at a higher discount than the mandates, we ought not to be surprised that in the year vi. they could not find contractors who would accept those promissory notes for more than the small amount of sixty millions. Hence I infer that during the current year they will not find dupes to a larger amount than thirty or forty millions. And even then this fourth imposition will be rather a burden than an advantage, since the market price will always be regulated by the risks incurred by the parties concerned. This minister is evidently reduced to the situation of a ruined gambler, with whom his former companions no longer care to risk the certain for the uncertain. He may still attempt to shame the *monied men* out of their *cupidity* and avarice; but they will equally insist on having the cash in hand, or they will oblige him to accede to conditions, by which they incur only the danger of losing a part of their profits without risking their capitals \*. Such are the inevi-

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\* The fate of the poor Ramel is truly worthy of compassion. It is asserted, that after passing the whole day in making promises of the same écu to twenty different persons, he is almost always forced either to give it to another, or to confess at last that in fact he has it not. It is said, however, that some contractors are still seen in his audience-chamber, but these are men who have nothing to lose, and have no security to offer; and it is asserted, that the struggles that prevail there from morning till night, to decide who shall be the dupe or the swindler, would afford scenes that might class with the Cheats of Scapin. These scenes furnish the Parisians with many an amusing witticism, and one of the poets of the day has thus described them:

Alcippe escamotte un traité  
 Pour une fourniture.  
 A Valère, Alcippe enchanté  
 Le vend avec usure.

table consequences of this well-merited discredit, which will appear in a still more striking point of view when we come to investigate the abortive attempt made by the two Councils in December 1797, to levy on the people a *patriotic loan of forty millions, to be very speedily advanced.*

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Valère le revend sous main,  
Prévoyant sa défaite ;  
De faillite en faillite, enfin,  
Le fourniture est faite.

Old Premium's art a contract gains  
To clothe the Gallic soldier bold,  
But soon a douceur he obtains,  
Nor are the clothes, but contracts, sold :  
And sold again, though under hand,  
Each shuffling off lest he be cheated ;  
Till thus the national demand  
By shuffling is at length completed.

But without recurring to the poets, we may form a pretty exact idea of the man who presides over all these *shufflings*, from what Arnould said in the debate of the 26th August. "The minister of finance," said he, "buried under the ruins of the past, tormented by the urgent necessities of the present, anxiously solicitous for the future, and harassed by the clamours of a million of discontented creditors, is ever uncertain how long he shall retain the good-will of either branch of the legislative body. What can such a minister do but seek with avidity for a few particles of gold amid the ruins of the public prosperity?"

Such is now the fate of this impostor, who made his way into the administration by publishing at the tribune of the Council of Five Hundred this memorable assertion : *It is for France alone to find resources in those very circumstances which seem to AGGRAVATE the difficulty of her situation.*

The very next day he was promoted to the conspicuous office he now holds ; and his colleagues would have been inconsolable for the loss of this great financier, had he not, when taking leave of them, assured them that he *had the fullest confidence in the resources of the republic.* As long as the assignats and mandats continued, he repeated the same joyful cry ; but no sooner had those props failed, no sooner was he obliged to climb with a heavy burden on his back up the mountain he was then descending, than nothing but groans were heard from this new and unfortunate Sisyphus.

## LOANS.

Never, never were so many artifices and falsehoods crowded one upon another, to dupe the most credulous of nations, and to induce even the English to believe, that *the success of the loan opened for the invasion of their island could be no longer doubtful*, or rather that it was already completed. The Directory, even when soliciting for this loan, took care that the proposal should not come from themselves. They left the merit of it to a chosen band of mercantile characters in the capital, selected by themselves, who came to demand an immediate audience, and implored as a favour to be permitted to bear the first expenses of *the descent upon England*, of which they represented the inhabitants as *a handful of pirates, who hide themselves in their innumerable vessels, and always fly when they are closely pursued*. Then comparing the Great Nation to the Romans, "History," continued they, "does not record that those famous conquerors, when they had any bold and obstinate enemies to contend with, declared to them *beforehand* that the war should be carried on *at their expense*. How conspicuous will this new *trait* appear in the annals of France!"

I am far from attempting to obliterate this trait from their annals\*; but these historians of the Great Nation will permit me to observe, that if that *famous nation*, to whom they modestly compare themselves,

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\* Another trait which must not be effaced, is to be found at the end of the *procès verbal* of that famous sitting of the Directory: *The chant du départ* has terminated every thing. *What applauses! What transports! Englishmen, consider well what this forebodes!!!*

divided, plundered, and swallowed up all their neighbours, one after another, it was merely because they made it a maxim of their policy never to *declare* their intentions *beforehand*; and most historians agree that a similar *declaration* would have saved the ancient, as it has saved the modern Carthage.

Montesquieu, when inquiring why the Romans enriched themselves by their wars, and why each of these *enabled them to undertake a new expedition*, explains this political phenomenon by two very simple causes; the extreme dissimulation of the senate, and the unparalleled disinterestedness of the troops; "The maxim of the generals," says he, "was to bring as much gold and silver as possible into the public treasury, and to give as little as possible to the soldiers. The booty was thrown into the common stock, and *nothing was lost*: for before they marched, every soldier *took an oath* that he would not *convert any thing to his private use*: and as the Romans were more observant of oaths than any other nation, these became the chief bond of their military discipline \*."

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\* It is well known that General Massena has improved on this discipline, by *converting to his private use* the greater part of the plunder, and refusing either to give an account of it, or to share it with his companions. It is well known too how much the latter were enraged at having sounded the charge and shared the danger, without participating in the spoil, and therefore denounced this new Brennus as the most insatiable Gaul that ever commanded a band of conquerors. "We persist in demanding vengeance for the robberies committed at Rome by our superiors, and by the corrupt and devastating administrations, who plunge themselves, night and day, in luxury and debauchery." Such was the energetic remonstrance, which at length obliged the Directory to displace Massena from the proconsulship of Italy; and it should seem that Bonaparte, who called him *the spoiled child of victory*, at length perceived that he must have less greedy lieutenant-generals; for he did not choose to take him into Egypt: and his first care on landing there was to publish

The reply of the Directory to these generous merchants deserves also to be added to their annals: " We applaud with *emotion* the enthusiasm of liberty that has brought you hither. The haughty and insolent English government, who flattered themselves with a *chimerical* hope that there no longer existed any national spirit in France, ought to consider this day as the æra of their *approaching* humiliation: all Europe has its eyes on this great event, and cannot but be struck with the contrast which the two nations at the present moment exhibit. The one is *sinking* beneath the *fiscal* oppression of a tyrannical government; while the other, after eight years of revolution, and of the most memorable wars, comes *spontaneously* to offer their riches to their country as a tribute of their industry, and thus *discovers the great depth of their resources*. If the French armies have proved that the republic is invincible, its commerce has this day proved that the *resources* of France are *inexhaustible*."

Such was the language of Barras; and the senator Jean Debry afforded a still more striking proof how *inexhaustible* are the gasconades of these proud republicans; for when he learned that twenty-five millions had already been actually paid into the treasury, on account of this loan, he rushed to the tribune to sing the *Te Deum* of exultation. " The English government," exclaimed he, " is averse to peace; well then, let them die of a *plethora*: let every *enlightened Eng-*

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the following proclamation to his brothers in arms: *Plunder can enrich but very few. It would disgrace us, and render us the enemies of those nations whom it is our interest to have for friends.*

This was a very important truth; but if Bonaparte was convinced of it, what business had he in Egypt?

*lishman* who understands his true interest, upbraid the ministers as the sole cause of the *stagnation* of his capital," &c.

Every *enlightened* Englishman, however, understanding these last words as threatening his country with *carrying away* their capitals, they crowded round their minister to offer him their lives and fortunes, and in a few hours he completed a loan equal to 400 millions of livres on more favourable terms than those of the preceding year. As to that opened by Ramel at Paris, its inconsiderable amount was unknown till the treasury, threatened with another 18th *Frujidor*, was forced to produce the account of their receipts, both in paper and specie, where the patriotic loan, which was stated to have been half filled up, only amounted to 960,000 livres (38,000*l.* sterling). Hereupon it is to be observed, 1st, That one half of this vast sum, advanced in the space of eight months, was paid in effects of little or no value; that is, in national effects \*. 2d, That the other half paid in

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\* To entice monied men to lend, they were permitted to pay half the amount subscribed in *inscriptions*, which however did not prevent the government from inserting the following article in all the public prints: "The commercial deputies have already offered the sum of twenty-five millions, and have, on this occasion, shown a *disinterestedness* characteristic of their *patriotism* and their *probity*. Even at a time when the rate of interest is raised so high by stock-jobbing and immorality, the interest of the twenty-five millions advanced to the government has been fixed without the least opposition on the part of the lenders at five *per cent. per annum*."

If there was no *opposition* on their part, this arose from these merchants having offered what the Directory previously engaged not to *exact*: but in vain did the latter endeavour to stimulate the nation at large to imitate this generous example; in vain did they proclaim to their rivals, that *the loan would be filled up, because the Great Nation execute every thing they resolve on*: in vain did Laussat say, when this was the subject of deliberation, that *loans of this kind are suddenly filled,*

money chiefly consisted of the plunder of orphans ; for the Councils found these investments so solid, that

*and do not admit of calculation.* The capitalists and monied men *calculated* the chances so accurately, that the twenty-five millions *offered* and *advanced* were, in fact, reduced to something less than half a million, of which above half was furnished by generous guardians, who gave a proof of their *disinterestedness*, their *patriotism*, and their *probity*, by delivering up the property of their wards.

The debates to which this loan gave birth, in the month of January 1798, well deserve consideration. Then it was that Monnot showed the necessity of embracing the offer of this loan, in order to terminate the war by the invasion of the *THREE haughty islands*, and to prove, by the rapidity with which it would be filled up, that the confidence of the Great Nation in their representatives is *perfect* and *complete*. But what gave him most uneasiness was, not so much the difficulty of finding the forty millions to be *very speedily advanced*, which the Directory were desirous of borrowing, but the fear testified by the lenders, of being some day treated in the same manner as those who had advanced money to the monarchical government. "Perish the man," exclaimed this moralist, "who shall first dare to make the proposal of infringing so sacred an engagement ! Certainly it will not come from a representative of the people ; but whosoever he may be, I devote him to the execration of posterity."

This invocation was repeated with a holy fervour by the same *representatives of the people*, who but nine decades before had made a bonfire on the altar of the country of two thirds of their public debts, which had so often been placed under the *safeguard* of the *national faith*.

It was not however this consideration that gave birth to the scruples of the Council of Elders ; but some of the members, who were most fully convinced of the success of the loan, frankly confessed their fears, that by having recourse to this expedient they should be brought back to the old system of the corrupt governments. Such were the apprehensions that Laussat exerted himself to dispel in a speech, the principles of which will appear more accurate than the conclusion : "It would doubtless be a strange illusion for a moment to imagine, that the first government in the world can, from this time forward, for ever renounce the system of loans. It would be saying that they will *nationalize* (confiscate), and sell one fourth of the territorial property of their soil, whenever they undertake a war of any serious importance, or that they will be for ever masters of the time, extent, and duration of their attacks and their defences, according to their convenience and resources. Let us no longer defer acknowledging, that *public credit* is, in the ordinary course of events, one of the most necessary and essential elements that support the five or six principal powers who command the fate of Europe. Let us then begin to prepare for reviving that of France against some future period. What nation in the world ought to look forward to obtaining, to



they abrogated the old law which forbade guardians from speculating with the property of their wards. 3d, That the committee of finances, in the midst of their urgent necessities, have offered and procured a decree for refunding in *specie* and *on demand*, to every subscriber who should require it, all the monies received in *specie*. Such an unexpected restitution cannot be accounted for but by the trifling amount of those sums, and because the government were in haste to be possessed of the revenues of the post-office, which had been previously assigned in pledge to the lenders, independently of an aliquot proportion of the plunder to be made *in consequence of future victories on the continent of England*.

It is nevertheless a fact, that, even since that period, Arnould has again talked of *loans* and of *credit*, representing the latter as an unexplored mine which the Directory might work with the greatest success: but it is not at home; it is in foreign countries he proposes to work the mine. In this grand discovery, however, Tarbé and Echauffériaux had long since anticipated him. "When the revolutionary spirit," said the former, "*ferments* in other states on the continent, where can the monied man invest his money

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establishing, to preserving, and to augmenting their credit with greater facility and *promptitude*? Public credit is a matter of indifference in the insurrections of liberty against tyranny. Money is not the nerve of this species of war. In them, public credit gives way to enthusiasm and indignation. When a nation are giving effect to deep-felt resentment, and organizing their irresistible vengeance against the crimes, the injuries, and the insults of a rival, a perfidious and a hostile government, we no longer ask, *How shall we employ our savings?* but we say, Till the enemy is vanquished, *no savings, no repose, no independence, no honour can exist*. The loan for the expedition against England will be *rapidly filled*, and after that another."

so securely as in a country whose revolution is *terminated*?"—"We perceive," said the latter, "to what an elevation of prosperity France must rise, by the nature of things, and by her own strength, if, through the consolidation of her government, not only her own capitals should return, but those of surrounding nations, then in a state of *revolution*, flow into her lap." But what may be still more easily perceived in this picture is, that the productiveness of this rich mine entirely depends on the possibility of *terminating* the revolution at home, and causing it to ferment abroad. As these two great events, however, are intimately connected together, as their progress seems to be the inverse of the hopes entertained by the financiers of France, and as the decree of bankruptcy has irrecoverably robbed them of the expedient of loans, they reproach themselves with a kind of bitter rage for having for a moment believed this decree would enable the republic to *regain that rank in the general opinion to which her comparative strength would entitle her*.

It is very curious to observe the enthusiasm with which, in their late debates, they have dilated on the invaluable advantages of public credit, and this but a few months after having sanctioned the disgraceful act which has given it a mortal stab. I have already quoted some parts of the enlightened discourse read by Baillet, to which I cannot too often recur, or make too generally known.

"The true cause of the straits we now experience is the cessation of *credit*.—Credit is a beneficent dew which fertilizes every thing that can attract it; but

it is dissipated by the slightest fear, and then leaves the surrounding atmosphere parched and barren to him who has violated the laws that govern it. His calamities will then be proportioned to the variety of his connexions. If the violator be a private individual, he involves in his ruin all those who are directly or indirectly connected with him : but if they are infringed by a government, all the fortunes in the country are affected ; and unless the evil is speedily repaired, *the state advances with rapidity on the career of its destruction.*—We leave to minute observers to determine how far distant these evils may yet be ; the most dangerous effects of which would be that of rendering the citizens unjust. They would accuse the government, whose dignity would thereby be compromised, and its situation would become the more critical, because, though actuated by the purest and most paternal views, yet being constantly harassed with the most urgent necessities, they would seem to be in a manner placed in opposition with the people, who look to them for their prosperity and their happiness. — Robbed of their tranquillity, and of that peace of mind which is the offspring of confidence and credit, the creditor becomes impatient, and the debtor has neither liberty nor repose ; for his necessities are ever on the watch to devour his most abundant receipts, nor can his most rapid returns keep pace with the urgency of his demands. It is a deplorable fact, that while Prussia borrows at four *per cent.* while the funds of England yield six *per cent.* while in Germany the contracts which were at five *per cent.* have been renewed at the reduced in-

terest of four *per cent.* it is *no less certain*, money can not be procured in the republic at less than twenty or twenty-five *per cent. per annum*; and that the market-price of land *falls* in proportion to this alarming increase of interest, which is, however, now grown quite familiar. Credit is the thermometer of the happiness of the people, and of the glory of nations. After we have been so victorious in the field, shall we suffer ourselves to be vanquished merely through the effects of the want of credit? Is such a conquest beyond the bounds of possibility?"

A deputy, till then but little known, could no longer contain his indignation, at hearing such a man as Bailleul borrowing the language of virtue, thus to declaim in favour of morality, and recommend a just respect for property; weep over the loss of confidence, and conclude this brilliant display of principles of justice, by conjuring the representatives of France to act in such a manner, that an unfortunate individual *might in vain be looked for throughout the republic.*

Rouchon (for that was the name of this new antagonist, who thus engaged the hypocrite Bailleul) overthrew him by a recapitulation of the most flagrant political breaches of faith, of which the latter boasts to have been the principal author, and under which, in reality, the national credit had sunk.

"The *public credit*," said he, to those who had applauded Bailleul, "that *credit* of which so much has been now said, is no other than a state of *confidence*, which presupposes many other correlative circumstances. It demands constancy in our systems;

a stable government, whose proceedings are regular and certain; and above all, a political law, from which we can never swerve, under the daily pretext of *saving the country*. But where does this *credit* exist, where can it be found, if property is not held sacred; if that of every citizen may be seized by calling him one day an *aristocrat*, the next a *federalist*, and the third an *anarchist*; or if public characters are not stable; if individual liberty is not inviolable; if one man trembles before another, and no longer trembles before the law? When revolutionary measures are *every thing*, and the constitution *nothing*, liberty exists no more, and slavery and terror universally prevail from the highest to the lowest authority\*." Here the speaker began to appeal, in support of his assertions, to the proscriptions of the 18th Fructidor: on which Bailleul, who was the great promoter of them, becoming furious at seeing the mask thus so completely torn from him, rushed to the tribune to drive away Rouchon, crying out *à l'Abbaye! à l'Abbaye!* ('To prison! to prison!') His opponent, however, was not intimidated by the clamours of the assembly: but the conclusion of this gladiatorial scene has no direct connexion with public credit, and I have already said enough to convince any impartial reader, that the expedient of loans cannot for a long period of years be recurred to by the French republic†.

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\* See the *Moniteur* of the 10th November 1798, No. 50.

† Lecouteulx devoted several pages to proving, that *at present public credit is not sufficiently established to admit of opening a loan with any prospect of success*.

## VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS.

The natural substitute for loans is that of patriotic *gifts*, which in time of danger the republic has a right to expect from its citizens. But its founders have so completely abandoned every hope of this nature, that this was the first object declared by Lacroix to Lord Malmesbury, on his arrival at Paris. "We are no longer in revolutionary times, my Lord," said the minister; "we can no longer induce the citizens to *open their purses*, and empty them into the national treasury, or to deprive themselves of necessities for the public good." It is true, that a little while after, to convince the English they had been duped by this false diplomatic confidence, and that the power of enthusiasm has no limits in France, the Council of Five Hundred made a general appeal to the republicans to open their purses, and voluntarily contribute to the expenses of the expedition against the *THREE haughty ISLANDS*. It is also true, that each patriot being permitted to make a speech when he presented his mite, the hall of the senate was not empty during several decades: but these speeches, although very warlike, mostly concluded, like that of the inhabitants of the Fauxbourg St. Antoine, by lamenting the small amount of the sacrifices they accompanied, and assuring the conscript fathers *that these would have been more worthy of the Great Nation, had their abilities been equal to their zeal and their love for the republic.*

The clerks or officers under government who had been so long unpaid, were those who chiefly distinguished themselves by the magnificence of their voluntary subscriptions; but Le Brun having learned that they were extorted from them by the *fear of losing their places*, emphatically protested against this mode of collection in violation of all rule and decency. He represented, that it was ill becoming a generous and free nation; and quoted the following fact, which deserves to be commemorated as an historical monument of what are called the halcyon days of the French revolution: "The Constituent Assembly opened a register for *patriotic gifts*. Mere imaginary donations! The debtor gave what was not his own, the house, the annuity, that belonged to his creditors or his children.—Let us not," continued this speaker, "open for the state the *poor-boxes*, that ought to be appropriated to the support of misery and indigence." He even declared, that he was "afraid the *enumeration* and the *insignificant amount* of these trifling alms would too clearly demonstrate the weak attachment of the citizens." Le Brun had so much reason to fear this, that, a few decades after, Riou came to the Council, boiling with indignation, to denounce the treasury, where he had just been told, that *the produce of the patriotic gifts did not exceed SIXTY-FIVE THOUSAND LIVRES*.—*This is not, and cannot be true*, added he; *for within these very walls two hundred thousand livres have been DEPOSITED*. Riou, however, was mistaken; they had not been actually *deposited* on the altar of their country, but merely enrolled in the

national bulletin ; and whoever examines what was there so ostentatiously displayed \*, will be astonished

\* A female citizen, who represented herself as *sharing but few of the favours of fortune*, was one of the first who obtained *honourable mention* for a donation of forty sous (one shilling and eight-pence sterling), which she deposited in specie on the altar of her country, and advised every Frenchman to do the same.

A Lyonese procured the same civic honour, by taking advantage of his own imprudence in purchasing a *parsonage*, and avoided the risks attendant on such a speculation by employing it as a *donation* to his country ; having learnt from a message of the Directory, that the purchasers of parsonages were *marked out for the poniard*, especially at Lyons.

To show, at the same time, their animosity against Great Britain, and their *contempt* of prejudice, the coopers of Marseilles resolved to devote Sunday the 28th January to *labour*, and promised to pay the produce into the national treasury for the *destruction of the English government*.

A stockholder generously sacrificed his claim upon the *State* two months after the decree of bankruptcy had swept it away.

The ex-general C. Valence, who had emigrated from France, and was sent away from England, was determined not to lose the opportunity of offering his *contingent of hatred* against the enemies of his country. The *Moniteur* of the 12th February 1798 states, "that he went before the French consul at Hamburg, and entered into an engagement to pay to the national treasury, *whenever the justice HE DAILY EXPECTED should be rendered him*, one tenth of what was due to him for the years II. III. IV. and V. of the *republican æra*."

The officers of the staff on board the *Heureux* "lamented that they could not devote part of their salaries to their country, because they had not been paid."

The *Moniteur* of the 23d March relates another instance, the generosity of which exceeds all those hitherto recited : "A secretary having proclaimed the patriotic gifts, Citizen Ortion, a clerk to the register-office, offered a *donation* of the sum deducted from his salary by the treasury for three ells of cloth, which he was to have received, but which were not delivered. *Honourable mention*."

In the same manner some Irishmen were recompensed, who came to present the *filial homage of the harp of Erin* ; and also two authors, till then unknown, who addressed a poem to the Councils, entitled, *War against England*, and a drama, called, *The Descent on England, a Prophecy in two Acts, in Prose*.

Such were the fruits of what was called the *generous impulse of the Great Nation* ! and after this enumeration we may easily judge whether Le Brun had reason to fear "that the trifling produce of these insignificant alms should give too accurate an idea of the weak attachment of the citizens."



to find in the accounts furnished by the treasury, that the grand total of these donations amounted to 273,607 livres, ten sous, and seven deniers, which is within a trifle of the same amount that was given by a single commercial house in one of the country towns of England, as a voluntary contribution in the very same year \*.

#### TAXES ON LUXURY.

Many speculators still imagine, that although the Directory cannot obtain succours from the rich by persuasion, they will be able to extort a part of their superfluity by means of taxes, which they will be forced to pay, or renounce their luxuries altogether. In fact, they have been menaced with this already; and the new committee of finances entertain so high an idea of the produce of such a measure, that they had announced, as a matter of *certainty*, the raising forty-five millions merely by an additional tax on carriages, horses, servants, coach-gateways, balconies, windows, &c.

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Many had imagined, that on being thus invited to *make a grand display of their resources*, they would have given far more striking proofs of their hatred against Great Britain, and made preparations more suited to the magnitude of the *indemnities* they hoped to derive from that conquest. The Deputy Bonnaire, on this occasion, observed, that every one was inquiring, *where was the enthusiasm fled that had given birth to the republic?* Might it not have been said in reply, that this enthusiasm had vanished with the assignat plate, which so richly and so long rewarded the ministers and supporters of the new system?

\* Robert Peel, Esq. of Bury in Lancashire, subscribed 10,000l. sterling. When a single individual gives such examples of public spirit, we cannot be surprised that the voluntary subscriptions, which Mr. Pitt estimated at only a million and a half, produced near two millions.

It is *certain* they have carried their boasts to this extent; but besides that these forty-five millions would supply but a very small part of the deficit, what success can be expected from this experiment, after the report which caused the famous *tax of humanity* to be immediately rejected? This tax differed but in name from that now imposed, and would even have been only one fourth as heavy, as it was not intended to levy more than ten or twelve millions; and, in short, the basis of the tax was already prepared, it being only in agitation to augment the sumptuary tax fifty *per cent.* The reporter, in the Council of Elders, entered into the most circumstantial details, to show that in the present state of affairs every tax on luxury would be a mere vision in finance. After having laid it down as a fact, that the sumptuary tax, which was expected to produce twenty millions, and which it was intended to extend to thirty, would only produce 400,000 livres in the capital, and not above two millions in the departments, he added, "Luxury, either apparent or real, is now so much diminished, partly by *necessary economy*, and partly by that dictated by good sense and wisdom, that, Paris excepted, it may be doubted whether there are *two hundred* carriages throughout the republic. In Dijon there were formerly eighty, which are now reduced to a couple of whiskeys; and in Rouen, where formerly 300 carriages were kept, there is now *only one*. As to servants, wages are so high, and the number of those who devote themselves to this mode of life is *happily* so much reduced, that

these two circumstances alone are sufficient to prevent employing more servants than are absolutely necessary for the business of a family \*."

Lecouteulx, who was the author of this report, took particular care to confirm it by the authority of those who were employing themselves in organizing the sumptuary tax. But even this was unnecessary; for the facts he had stated were so well known to most of his colleagues, that they unanimously rejected the tax of *humanity*; and the Directory gained nothing by their message, but the shame of the palpable impostures they had employed to cause it to be unanimously adopted by the Council of Five Hundred †. But, on a closer investigation, they were at length so well convinced of the impossibility of raising the sumptuary tax from twenty to thirty millions, that they have resolved to diminish it to *a million and a half*. And yet, that they might not be disappointed in so

\* See the *Moniteur* of the 12th February 1798.

† In order to obtain this unanimity, the Directory sent a message to the Council of Five Hundred, in which they declared, "that the British minister had condemned *in a mass* all the French prisoners, to the number of 25,000, *to be starved to death*." But as the Council seemed to entertain some doubts of the reality of this horrid sentence, Riou drew a letter from his pocket, as if by chance, which he said he had received from one of these prisoners, who stated, that "the bleeding carcass of a dog that had been found was contended for with knives; and that the English government having granted the surgeons a guinea for *every limb* they cut off from the republicans, this premium had induced those wretches to *mutilate* all the French that had the misfortune to fall into their hands." These circumstantial particulars having removed all doubts, Villers ventured to add, that *the English government carried their atrocity so far as to shoot the prisoners en masse in their dungeons*, and then hastened to take advantage of the impression this *atrocity* made on the feeling hearts of his colleagues, to bring forward the plan of the new tax, which he emblazoned with the splendid title of the *tax of humanity*.

moderate an expectation, they have been obliged to include female servants \*.

Incredible as it may appear, it was but a few weeks after they had recognised the necessity of this immense reduction, that the two Councils again directed their attention to *taxing luxuries without pity*, and invented and adopted the tax on balconies and windows, of which the produce was estimated at twenty-five millions in their speculative view of imaginary receipts for the current year.

We ought then by no means to lose sight of the facts so precisely laid down by Lecouteulx, whenever we hear of the *colossal fortunes* raised during the revolution, and which L. Buonaparte wishes to see *disgorged* into the public treasury. He forgets, that the newly-acquired fortunes have already been severely taxed by the depreciation and annihilation of paper; for most of those who, three years ago, thought themselves *millionaires*, because they had amassed, perhaps, three millions in paper, have ultimately found their fortunes reduced to *one thousand livres* in specie, when the assignats were called in at the rate of 3000 livres for one. The calculation is easily made, and explains the following passage already quoted from the report delivered by Laporte: "An assessment of from 6,000 to 10,000 livres has often

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\* Sainthorent, on whose report this measure was adopted, on the 16th November, had the effrontery to represent this new fiscal exaction as purely political and moral: "The object of our institutions," said he, "will ever be to rescue *men* from the debasing condition of servants in the towns, and to leave household cares in the hands of *women*."

To lay a tax on female servants is a strange means of *leaving* household cares in the hands of women!

brought the bailiff and his runners into a house where he has only found an *old truckle-bed* in lieu of the rich furniture, the luxury, and the magnificence that prevailed in the year v." It is evident, that these old truckle-beds, being unaccompanied with furniture, the assessments which appeared moderate at the beginning of 1796, have become *extravagant* towards the end of 1798 \*.

These facts prove, that notwithstanding the legislators of France proclaim that the *ostentatious display* of luxury at Paris *challenges taxation*, yet this luxury is not that of opulence, nor is it such as can be within the reach of the bailiffs and their runners, by means of any truly productive taxes; that Saint-Aubin's observation was very just when he said, they ought at least to be called taxes *on misery*; and that if the republican government has no other resources for procuring the additional milliard they stand in need of, than the sumptuary taxes proposed, this government is irrevocably condemned, like the ancient monarchy, to fall a victim to *the deficit and the disorder of the finances*.

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\* This subject has been very judiciously treated by Lecouteulx in a publication, wherein he observes, " that *extravagant assessments* had been laid; that these had excited universal complaints; and that to continue them as they were, was the surest means not to have them paid, even by those who were not overcharged, but who would take advantage of the just complaints of their neighbours."

He insisted also on the absurdity of expecting any taxes on luxury to be productive; and foretold, that this system, *which has now so many partisans in France, will be as STERILE in its effects as it was ARBITRARY in its execution*.

Bailleul went farther, as appears by the following passage of his report of the 8th August: " We ought strongly to impress our minds with the following remark of a celebrated author: If, in *such circumstances*, you decree new taxes without previous measures to ensure that every one who is liable shall be enabled to pay, it is like putting a dumb man to the torture to induce him to confess."

HAVING thus taken a survey of the five resources on which the financiers of France have relied for doing away their immense deficit, let us contemplate for a moment the phænomenon of popular revolutions: let us reflect, that the revolution of France was undertaken to remedy a deficit of fifty or sixty millions; and that Dédelay, perceiving it increased by the first decrees of the Constituent Assembly, which they emblazoned with the title of *reforms*, gave them the following advice on the 7th January 1791: “ Two years of labour will only end in convincing Europe more and more, that our *finances* ever have been, and ever will continue to be, the *rock* on which our power and prosperity will be wrecked! What! we have been called together to fill up a deficit of fifty or sixty millions, and shall all our reforms end in increasing it to 102 millions?—This will be giving the enemies of the revolution reason to imagine, that, being unable to *create*, we have been indiscreet enough to *destroy*.”

This prophetic language is the more remarkable, as it was pronounced by a man who is still a deputy, and has successively occupied a seat in every one of those assemblies which have completed the *destruction* of every thing while promising to *create* every thing *anew*; which, by means of paper circulation, have discovered the double secret, of infinitely increasing both the expenditure and the deficit; and which dare still to repeat to the people, that their *resources* to cover it are entire.

How many pangs does not the mind undergo when we cast our view over the past, and compare

it with the present ! Who but would shudder at the dreadful exhaustion brought on by the usurpers of that fine country, if that very state of exhaustion did not afford all the nations whom France has plundered a certainty of recovering their domains, their independence, and their honour, as soon as they shall make such efforts as are proportioned to this treble achievement ?

But if, with a blindness that has already endangered our sinking again into barbarism, they suffer themselves once more to be imposed on by that assembly of maniacs, who are still crying out, that they have *the means of supporting all the extraordinary expenses of many more campaigns* ; that the *disorder of the finances is perhaps less fatal* to France than to her enemies, who ought to be *alarmed* whenever they hear of the obstacles that *impede* her resources :—to these boasts I shall oppose the cries of *alarm* which the regicides, from time to time, suffer to escape them in their lawless assemblies ; where they confess, that the *wheels of the machine are on the point of stopping, and that they threaten the most fatal disorder* \*. It is particularly in their late debates that the sentiments they themselves entertain of this inevitable catastrophe transpire. It is there they constantly repeat, that a *violent crisis* is preparing † ; that the deficit has become a gulf that will *swallow up the republic* ‡ ; that *their safety* depends on the *certainty of filling it up* § ; that this must be accomplished, *or a revolution will speedily take place through the disorder of*

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\* Harmand.  
Directory.

† Fabre.

‡ The message of the  
§ Ramel, minister of finances.

*the finances* \* ; that it was, *in fact*, the finances that annihilated the monarchy, and not the declamations of the philosophers † ; that all the measures of finance hitherto adopted have been mere *palliatives*, and have only covered a volcano, of which the explosion will thence become more dreadful ‡ : in short, that the danger is *imminent*, and that the situation of the republic, in regard to the finances, is so precarious, and surrounded with so many rocks, that it ought to *strike terror into every one who reflects upon the subject* §.

As Arnould is esteemed one of the deputies who is the best qualified to *reflect* on this subject ||, we shall

\* Fabre.

† Baraillon.

‡ Duflos.

§ Legendre, on the 5th October 1798.

|| The man best qualified to *reflect* on this subject throughout France was undoubtedly General Montesquiou, who, before his death, published a kind of political testament, concluding with these words: " If it were precipitately attempted to make use of credit before it has been erected by the only means which can give it birth; or if, under the false pretext of national dignity, we engage in expenses that will exact from the people sacrifices above their strength; I will venture to declare to the arbiters of our destiny, that THE REPUBLIC WILL BE DESTROYED for ever."

Another French general, less conversant with this subject, but whom no one will deny to possess great perspicacity, published, in September 1798, a work, wherein he declared, " that the disorder of the finances is at its height; and that, in this respect, France is at her last push." This discovery of Dumouriez would have been more meritorious had it been less tardy, or had he perceived its truth, when under his auspices a general war was so readily undertaken, which could not but bring on the ruin of their paper circulation, and which they are now reduced to carry on without either fictitious or real resources. However this may be, that general is now of the same opinion as those who declare, that the republic will fall a victim to the deficit: " The greatest of its dangers," says he, " and that which will inevitably produce a decisive revolution, *though we do not yet foresee* exactly in favour of which party, is the IRREMEDIAL disorder of the finances."

I only differ with this writer in thinking it *easy to foresee*, that this decisive revolution will in the end be fatal to the system of equality, which promotes to public offices a class of men who cannot subsist without salaries; and that it will be *favourable* to that system of go-



conclude this chapter with the *reflections* he presented in his report of the 26th August 1798 : “ The deluge of paper,” said he, “ once the main spring of our independence, is become the *principle* of our present languor.—We cannot get rid of this dilemma; either we must not order the expenditure of 600 millions, or we must assign funds for their discharge.—From our punctuality in fulfilling this part of our commission, or the contrary, must arise, and that perhaps *speedily*, the  *blessings* or the *despair* of the nation.—We have endeavoured, by every where forcing nature, that our annual revenue, which has *decreased by accident*, on the ancient territory of France, should support all the expenses of our happy and memorable achievements.—Is it not contrary to every principle of self-preservation in a people to persevere with obstinacy, and without method or discretion, in taking from their annual revenue such enormous and extraordinary expenses, so that we *might easily calculate* the period when, if the war continues, the whole expenditure *will exceed the value of the annual produce of France?*”

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vernment which confides the internal administration of the country exclusively to men of landed property.

But what is still difficult to *foresee*, is the precise period when this decisive revolution will take place. Perhaps it will not burst forth till the receipts no longer suffice for the *indemnities* of the legislative body, and the *pay* of the troops. Then will the whole odium of their privations fall on that government of usurpers, which will learn, by dear-bought experience,

—*Non esse ducis strictos sed militis enses.* LUCAN.

It might even be said, that they have already a presentiment of this event; for in their message of distress of the 3d October, they remind the two Councils, that “ the constitutional INDEMNITIES could not be infringed without very *serious inconveniences*; and that the *pay* of the troops is a *sacred debt*.”

This is the truest declaration that has been made in the two Councils; nor do I differ with this reporter, except in thinking it *easy to calculate that the period* which he announced as *speedily* approaching is already arrived. The calculation seems to me so clear at this day, that I would venture to defy them to levy in taxes, for the present year, on their exhausted nation, one third of all the sums they flatter themselves with obtaining, and which are represented as indispensably necessary to prevent a *revolution* from being brought on *by the disorder of the finances*.

But I here foresee an objection which many enlightened men will adduce, and which is far more difficult to rebut than any of those which I flatter myself I have sufficiently answered. “ You need not,” they will say, “ thus insist on the examination of their *regular* resources, when the object of inquiry is a government wholly *irregular* in all its steps, and that has accustomed its subjects no longer to contemplate any thing as their own. In lieu of talking of taxes and loans, show us that *forced loans* and *requisitions in kind*, and even the *confiscation of real property*, can no longer be practised. Show us the limits of the patient endurance of the people.— They are become strangers even to their own sufferings. The republic has existed, and still exists, in spite of the deficit. It is from her poverty and disorder, that her own greatness and the fall of her neighbours has arisen. Thus will they proceed as they have begun, and the past become a pledge for the future\*.” What care the Di-

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\* *Antidote against the Congress of Rastadt.*

rectory for the diminution of the enjoyments of their slaves, since they have organized a numerous soldiery, whose pay is collected at the point of the sword? As long as the soil will produce crops sufficient to feed the people and the soldiers, nothing will be wanting to their leaders—*who seize upon their last resources with the arm of despotism and the forms of liberty. If the circulating medium disappear, they fasten directly, by means of requisitions, on the objects represented by it. If promises are needful, they are given in profusion: if it is necessary these should be broken, they are violated and forgotten\**. As long as a sheaf of corn, or a truss of hay, shall remain in the granaries of the farmers, these tyrants will seize it for themselves†. If the surplus of the fruits of the earth be insufficient for them, they will seize the soil itself, and, secure in their impunity, amidst a people whom they have plunged into the most abject wretchedness, they only suffer the reservoir of the public treasure to be exhausted, merely because they consider themselves certain of again filling it by new crimes whenever necessity shall urge them. There is not one of their

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\* M. Necker.

† Although I here quote these words from a former work of M. Mallet Dupan, and endeavour to show that this opinion, which might be well founded at the beginning of the reign of terror, is no longer applicable to the present circumstances of France, I acknowledge, that no writer has so well discovered the sources of the dangers with which France at this day threatens all the nations of Europe. *It is to PLUNDER them*, he has lately said, *that she revolutionizes them. It is that she may SUBSIST HERSELF, that she plunders them.* This is the true statement reduced to its most simple terms, and this is the text of the voluminous work I am here offering to the public; of which the only object is to prove this grand truth by a series of facts, which, though little known, are incontestably established.

acts, or of their debates, in which we do not read this dreadful maxim: *Ærarium si ambitione exhausserimus, per scelera supplendum erit.*

I shall not be accused of stating these objections feebly. I will now endeavour to reply to them.

## CHAPTER X.

*The Impossibility of the French Government recurring to Confiscations, Requisitions, and forced Loans. The revolutionary Resources are exhausted.*

**P**ERIODS there are, says Voltaire, when the people become cowards in proportion as their masters become cruel. Never did the history of his countrymen better justify this melancholy maxim, never did they submit with more baseness to the yoke of despotism. If the tyranny of their present oppressors is somewhat less bloody than that of Robespierre, it is incomparably more disgraceful to the nation. That monster had, as it were, enslaved them by surprise; but when they had burst their chains, they repeatedly swore never more to bend their necks to TERROR, but to be ever awake, and prepared to repel its attacks.

The principal difference between the *revolutionary* and the *constitutional* terror \* is, that the tribunals of the committee of public safety shed blood *en masse* and by case-shot, whereas the military commissions of the Directory shed it *by drops* and by musket-shot; and that the *avenging lead* which they now boast of

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\* A petitioner, who lately claimed to have some property restored to him, said with great simplicity, that it had been taken from him *at the time of the GRANDE TERREUR*: nor did the Council of Five Hundred take any offence at this descriptive expression.

*rattling about their enemies' heads* \*, has succeeded the *national razor*, by which the murderers of Lewis XVI. exult in having *shortened* him. Another difference is, that in lieu of crowding the *suspected* citizens and the *nonjuring* priests into houses of confinement, where the constant view of their innocence and their misery excited the compassion of the people, the Directory find it more economical to transport them beyond sea to a *burning climate*, where, as Rouchon expresses himself, they have *nothing but death before their eyes*.

But let us compare these two species of terror merely with relation to financial resources; and let us see whether those who have seized the sceptre of Robespierre can return to the career of productive plunder. In 1795 I announced, that this resource was already irrecoverably lost to them; and I am now enabled to prove that important truth to a demonstration. This, however, is so contrary to the received opinion, and its promulgation may be so useful to the new republics, who begin to adopt the system of confiscations, that I think it necessary to dilate a little on the amount of what it has yielded to the mother republic.

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\* See the Moniteur of the 9th November 1798, No. 49, containing a letter from Morand, a general of brigade, who having taken thirty-five prisoners in Belgium, sent them to one of his friends, *that he might have their heads rattled with lead*. Just such was the style of Marat and of Dubois Crancé.

## CONFISCATIONS OF REAL PROPERTY.

We ought never to forget, that the *colossal fortune* which the revolutionists imagined they were acquiring by sequestering lands, rested on the idea, that these would still preserve their former value, and would sell, as before, for about thirty years purchase. It was with this extravagant idea, but especially with the assistance of the *assignats*, that the committee of public safety supplied and *nourished* the national treasury, by converting the lands into money, or, as it were, *coining* them the moment they were confiscated. They did not even wait for purchasers: they emitted their paper, and said to those on whom it was lavished, *Seize the confiscated estates, for they are your own.* As long as the people were weak enough to believe that they represented the nominal value of the paper emitted, they entered heart and hand into that criminal measure, to receive the reward of it in *assignats*; for it was this paper medium that furnished Robespierre with the means of paying the agents of his plunder. Such was his boasted method of *coining money* on the *Place de la Revolution*.

The whole then of this infernal system was built on the credit of the *assignats*, and this depended on the opinion that the confiscated lands would still retain their former value. This double error still prevailed towards the end of the year 1794; and during that very year the salaries of the committees who superintended the confiscations alone amounted to the enormous sum of 591 millions. It is true, that after

the death of their leader none of the salaries then due to this revolutionary squadron were paid, and for this very reason the Directory cannot expect they should ever again enrol themselves under their banners, unless they are paid beforehand, or unless they are suffered to devour the prey which the Directory may be desirous of seizing for themselves.

I do not mean to say, that the Directory are not sufficiently powerful to seize lands without their aid; but what may in some measure make us easy with respect to such an event is, that even the revolutionary financiers are now bitterly deploring that they took this rash step, and have discovered that they ruined themselves by the very means through which they expected to be enriched.

Incredible as it may appear, the sale of the royal residences, the palaces, hotels, convents, and, in a word, all the town edifices, from which the plunderers expected to derive A MILLIARD (forty millions sterling) *in inscriptions*, have not produced *in specie* A THOUSAND LOUIS. Those who caused this mode of sale to be adopted in March 1797, will not fail to exclaim against the assertion, which in truth is too extraordinary to be believed without proofs; but these I cannot adduce without recurring to another fact of a no less extraordinary nature.

It will be remembered, that towards the fall of the assignats the embarrassments of the committee of public safety were such, that, no longer finding contractors willing to accept of assignats at any price, they were reduced to the necessity of clandestinely inscribing them among the stockholders in the Great



Book ; and that they created, among others, *two hundred millions* of new inscriptions, in order to pay *only one million one hundred thousand livres in specie* (44,000l. sterling), which were due to a company of contractors at Havre and at Genoa. It must be remembered too, that this singular transaction was not discovered or denounced by Ramel till it was too late to be remedied, the greater part of this new stock having been very speedily brought to market and transferred, without a possibility of the purchasers having the least suspicion of their recent and usurious origin\*.

If the legislative body treated this at first as a matter of but little importance, their indifference arose from the hope they entertained of getting this new stock again into their possession, and cancelling it together with the old, by means of the decree authorizing the purchase of national domains with the public stocks, as the land-tax has been bought up in England ; but as a part of the purchase-money was to be received in specie, very few purchasers offered for landed estates, and scarcely any for the houses situated in towns, which, as they were daily falling to decay, cost much more in repairs than they produced in rent. This was what induced Cambacères to propose, that all these buildings should immediately be put up to sale, and that the *whole* of the purchase-money should be paid in *inscriptions*.

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\* See *L'Histoire de l'Administration des Finances de la République Française pendant l'Année 1796*, p. 109 and 110, containing the particulars of this transaction, and Thibaut's justification of it. He said, " We had no money to give, we could not lavish *assignats*, and therefore we gave *inscriptions* in the Great Book."

"The national houses in the hands of the nation," said he, "are an absolute burden; for they deprive it of the mobiliary tax and of the duties on sales and transfers. *Their produce can never equal the expenses of keeping them up, or balance the chances of their decay.*" Cambacères then dilated on the double advantage of thus getting rid of a property, which he represented as *extinguished*, and proportionally diminishing the amount of the national debt, of *which the burden was so heavy*. He added, *Thus will the Great Book be purged of all the new inscriptions with which its pages have been sullied.*

However seducing this idea might appear, Thibau-deau perceived the snare with his accustomed perspicacity: "I know," said he, "that whatever is managed by a nation is ill administered, and what has been said of houses *applies also to all the national domains*; but this is not a sufficient reason for inconsiderately putting them all up to sale to the first who will bid any thing for them, merely for the sake of getting rid of them—*No purchasers are to be found, it seems!* And is it by ingenuously making this declaration that it is expected to find them? Is not this declaring, in other words, that they will be sold for little or nothing?"

This was clearly insinuating the expediency of restoring them; and I must do Saint-Aubin the justice to state, that although he afterwards became the defender of this new mode of sale, he endeavoured to prevent it by a publication, wherein he asserted, "that even the decay of the national domains led

the most enlightened and upright of the departmental administrations to adopt an opinion, that if the nation could not dispose of them at any price, they ought literally to give them away rather than keep them ; that the loss arising from the sequestration of the property of above 40,000 individuals is so great, that nothing but a mania to destroy, and a furor to oppress, could prevent the *immediate erasure of at least four fifths of the number, who are evidently innocent.*"

One of the legislators, who then possessed the greatest influence (Thibaut), fearing, no doubt, that the expediency of these erasures should be discussed, was anxious to dissuade his accomplices from it by saying, " Must I then at last declare the **WHOLE TRUTH** ? *Yes ; we must force the emigrants to sleep in the streets, and take from them all hopes of returning.*"

This however was not the *whole truth* ; no, it was as follows : This same Thibaut, who thus appeared to speak the language of his heart, was at the head of affairs at the time when *the one million one hundred thousand livres* due to the contractors at Havre were settled for, by inscribing them in the Great Book as *two hundred millions* of capital received, and ten millions annual interest. He was from time to time reproached with the ruinous terms of this bargain ; and as he flattered himself, that by offering the national houses in exchange for the inscriptions, the *claims* with which he had *sullied* the pages of the Great Book might be effaced, he made a particular point of thus obliterating that transaction.

Nothing can equal the glittering hopes which he

and his party founded on this exchange. Although the minister Ramel estimated the probable produce of the *houses situated in towns* at only 400 millions, the committee of finances asserted, that “ this estimate appeared to them *below* the price they ought to expect from the competitions at the auctions.” Mention has been made,” added Craffous, “ of *uninhabitable* buildings; but I say they are merely *uninhabited*; that at the present price of inscriptions \*, the sale of them may obliterate from the Great Book, stock to the amount of *a milliard*; and that France may perhaps thus see *half* her debt extinguished.” This brilliant prospect removed all their scruples, and the decree of redemption was confidentially sanctioned by the Elders on the 29th March 1797, in consequence of the following observation of Clauzell: “ It has been said the public treasury is in want of money: agreed; but what does the present rent of your houses produce? *Two millions* a year, which are scarcely sufficient to repair them. These sales will also cancel *above a milliard* of national debt, and at the same time enable you to afford relief to the stockholders.”

Before we come to the brilliant produce of the sales, it is important to observe, that, in order to induce all the holders of new inscriptions to attend them, the Directory took particular care to announce by a message, “ that it was of the utmost importance that

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\* The *market-price* of the inscriptions was then about ten *per cent.*; and therefore, as they flattered themselves with the prospect of cancelling *a milliard* by the sale of these edifices, it appears they proceeded on a supposition, that they preserved a real value in the public opinion of about 100 millions.

they should go *thither in crowds*; and that none but those who did not contribute to these *salutary sales* of the national domains need to fear REVISIONS and liquidations" (or reductions).

So anxious were they to withdraw these inscriptions from circulation, that the sales immediately commenced throughout France, and particularly in the department of the Seine, in which two thirds of the confiscated town estates were situated. After they had thus sold, during four full months, those lots which, being less damaged than the rest, more easily found purchasers, and when no more bidders offered, the committee appointed to declare the total produce of the sales announced, on the 30th July, that *only EIGHT millions of inscriptions had been cancelled* \*. Now, as somewhat above half this sum had been received for landed estates, it appears that the innumerable superb edifices sold by auction during that interval, were sold for less than *four millions* of national paper, and thus only served to recover one fiftieth of the 200 millions created for the payment of the *one million one hundred thousand livres* due to the contractors of Havre. Hence, by taking one fiftieth of the goods furnished, or of their corresponding claims, we arrive at an arithmetical demonstration, that for an effective capital of *twenty-two thousand livres* (or the paltry sum of 880*l.* sterling), the republic has alienated the palaces, hotels, convents, and other edifices, which, according to Clauzell,

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\* See the *Moniteur* of the 3d August 1797.

produced an annual income of *two millions* at the time when they were put up to sale, and no doubt yielded more than *ten* before the revolution \*.

It will be said, perhaps, that these buildings have not all been actually sold, and that a considerable number have been abandoned to the creditors of the

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\* If the buyers were really obliged to purchase the *inscriptions* at the then market-price, these four millions would cost them 400,000 livres, they being at 10 *per cent.* although, in fact, the republic has only received 22,000.

I particularly recommend it to the author of the *Antidote au Congrès de Rastadt* to reflect on this fact, on which perhaps I should have been less prolix, had not that writer, in the fervour of his zeal, urged all the coalesced powers to seize, as the *best means of defence*, those church lands, of which the security has already been rendered too precarious by the writings of philosophers. Another piece of advice given by this writer to the princes of Europe is far more baneful, because it is of a nature calculated one day to obtain partisans in France. It is as follows.

“Some resources will yet be found, both of *money and opinion*, in *revolutionary confiscations*—yes, I repeat it, in *confiscations*.—The revolution has *nourished* itself by confiscations. It has thrown the world into confusion by confiscations. Wherever the revolution exists, property gives way to confiscation. It has massacred to confiscate, and it confiscates to massacre. In this *we must imitate it*, and we must oppose confiscations to confiscations; but let them be the confiscations of justice, opposed to those of iniquity; those which *repair* the injury done to *property*, to those which are subversive both of property and of society; those which are *profitable to the state*, to those which have only benefited the public bloodsuckers and the tricoloured vultures.—The revolutionists ought to learn, at their own expense, that every thing has its limits, and that there exists such a law as that of *reprisals*.”

I have too high an opinion of the enlightened mind of the unfortunate prince, for whose restoration to the throne of his ancestors the French nation are now fighting in secret, to believe it possible he should wish to seat and establish himself upon it by means of *confiscations*. Sooner or later he will recover his lawful crown; but when that event takes place, should he unfortunately listen to ministers, who may be so short-sighted as to recommend an appeal to the *law of reprisals*, and to think the revolution ought to be imitated; were he to permit the patrimonial estate of a single republican to be sold, there will be no possibility of restoring the finances: and yet without restoring them there will be neither security for the people nor repose for their monarch. It is but on this basis of property that his throne can be established.

state. This is true. But the necessity of thus getting rid of the refuse of the buildings that could not find purchasers even for the mere value of the materials, places in a stronger light the impossibility of recurring to the system of expropriations, and its ruinous effects on the government that adopts it.

Yet it is after this recent transaction, so worthy to be considered as an æra in the fasti of this government of plunderers, that it is feared they should discover new sources of productive confiscation ! I can freely assert, that it is not the shame of the crime that prevents it ; it is the experience that, as soon as they touch real property, that property shrinks into instantaneous ruin ; that *its produce never equals the expenses of keeping it in repair* ; and that in the end they are obliged to put up these estates inconsiderately to sale, and to the first bidder, merely through *the necessity of getting rid of them*. This the successors of Robespierre well know, and tremble at the fact ; and if, when they again raised the iron sceptre of terror, they have not once more dragged the landholders to the *Place de la Revolution*, (let us not deceive ourselves,) it is because they have had too many melancholy proofs that it is impossible again to *coin money* there ; and because, since the plate for the assignats has been broken, they can neither pursue the steps of their master, nor supply and *nowish* the public treasury by *feeding* the scaffolds,

But as arguments are nugatory, unless supported by facts, I will relate one which is more conclusive than any yet stated. Since the fall of the paper circulation, which has left the Directory the most de-

vouring necessities to encounter, they have not only abstained from any farther confiscations of real property, but have also relaxed as much as possible from the right conferred by the law of the 9th *Floréal* in the year III. to demand from the emigrated families (to be delivered up without delay) the inheritance which would eventually have come to them after the death of their children and heirs. And to what can we attribute so much apparent moderation? Doubtless to their perceiving, that by precluding these families from the possibility of selling even that portion of their estates of which they are allowed to retain possession, this impolitic decree has deprived the treasury of considerable duties arising from the transfer of property. Cambacères was the first who perceived and pointed out the magnitude of this loss, by observing, that the *real estates in the hands of the nation deprive it of the duties of enrolment levied on each transfer.*

This circumstance is very consolatory; but what is much more so, immediately after the triumph of the 18th Fructidor, the Directory themselves rejected the offer made them of all the lands of the nobility.

Every one who has watched the progress of this last revolution, must remember, that its object was *to regenerate the finances*; and that, in order to restore them as speedily as possible, some of the victorious party proposed to confiscate all the real property of the nobility who had not emigrated, and to banish them to fifty leagues beyond the frontiers. This grand fiscal project far exceeded all those of Robespierre, who never had an idea of proscribing the ex-nobles



in a mass, in order to plunder them in a mass. He limited his measure of general safety to ordering them not to go within ten leagues of the great towns. But this new discovery was reserved for that great philosopher Sieyes, who, at the commencement of his revolutionary career, so energetically pleaded the cause of the clergy and their *tithes*; and who, indignant at not having succeeded in preventing this first spoliation, let fall that severe sarcasm, casting at the same time a look of contempt at his colleagues: *they are desirous to be free, and know not to be just!*

But when this hypocrite perceived that nothing was to be got by thus preaching up justice, he soon changed his tone, and was esteemed by his associates another Cato, by constantly and sententiously asserting, that *as long as there are any nobles in France there will be a nobility*. This maxim may be considered as the germ of the motion just mentioned; for no sooner was the victory of the 18th Fructidor decided, than this champion of the *Tiers état* again came out of his hole to propose a committee, of which he was himself a member, to present a report on the measures to be adopted for the extinction of the nobility in France.

Although it was Boulay that read this report, every one perceived that it was the language and style of the Abbé Sieyes, were it but for his frequent appeals to the *knowledge of the human heart*. It began with observing, that "the true nobles having been stripped of their privileges, and of all that composed their moral existence, and this by the *republic*, so far from being able to love it, or even to contemplate it with

indifference, they must necessarily detest it, together with its founders and partisans, and consequently be uniformly endeavouring to effect the destruction of the one and the extermination of the other. This we confidently assert," added the committee, "and we have no apprehension that we can be deceived, for we argue from a *knowledge of the human heart*."

After this exordium, they demanded the immediate expulsion of the ex-nobles, proposing, "that all their estates should be sold, and the produce, *deducting an indemnity for the expenses of the war*, remitted to them in commodities of French manufacture, after they had evacuated the territory of the republic."

The writer of this report omitted no exertions to display the advantages of this grand measure of legislation: "A kind of *prejudice*," said he, "still exists in favour of the nobles of that cast, which has great weight with the vulgar.—How then can we get rid of them? There are but two methods; either to *exterminate*, or to *expel* them. They would exterminate *us* if they had us in their power, but we will *only expel* them; for that is *sufficient* for our purpose; and in fact, it is the only measure that it is expedient to adopt.—While expelling the high nobility, we do not indeed confiscate their estates; we think they ought to be sold, and the price *given* to them on two conditions: 1st. That it shall be *converted* into commodities of French manufacture. 2d. That an *indemnity* shall be retained for the expenses of the war.—Nor should the produce be remitted till sufficient proofs are received of their arrival in foreign countries, at a distance of at least fifty leagues from the

frontiers of the republic. From this day (the 16th October 1797) these estates will remain *in the hands of the nation*.—What do we gain by this measure? The exportation of an enormous cargo of all sorts of vices, and the banishment of a dreadful mass of political and moral corruption. *This is the real truth*. We ask, Would it be expedient for men of common sense, who are friends to their country, and *republicans*, to be *moved* and affected, and to shed tears at such an expulsion?"

At this passage the Deputy Serres could not help interrupting the report, by crying out, that *he discovered in it the most horrid tyranny that had ever oppressed mankind*. I discover in it, added he, *the execrable genius of Robespierre*.

The acolyths of the Abbé were struck dumb at hearing this free language only four weeks after the banishment of fifty-two representatives of the people; but having learnt on all sides, that notwithstanding the great renown of the chief, under whose banners they had enlisted, his proposal was not relished either by the Directory or the Jacobins, they immediately withdrew it, bitterly complaining that it had been so much misunderstood and misinterpreted. "It has been pretended, that this scheme would have been an attack on property, that it would have plundered not only the persons expelled, but their CREDITORS. This reproach is *false*," said the reporter of the committee; "we know that *property* is one of the most essential foundations of society. It was not as men of *property*, but as *nobles*, incompatible with and dangerous to our existence, that they were to be ex-

elled.—Your committee were aware, however, that this measure would for the present occasion an exportation of specie, were it but for the price of the furniture and personal property the exiles might convert into money. Our system, therefore, was reduced to expelling those of the higher nobility who had not emigrated, and who, by their mere existence on the territory of the republic, are more *dangerous* than those who have," &c.

This extract sufficiently demonstrates, that the whole *system* of the high-priest of jacobinism was *reduced* to imputing to the nobles as a crime their obedience to that law which constituted it a crime to quit the territory of France. In short, the essence of his report may be *reduced* to this :

Ei si vous n'en sortiez, vous en deviez sortir.

But if his metaphysical arguments did not in this instance succeed, and if the proposition was rejected without even being sent to the Council of Elders, we must by no means attribute this to the justice or moderation of the legislative body. The parties who were thus threatened with destruction owed their safety to very different causes, and particularly to the lower class of people in the Fauxbourgs of Paris, who openly declared in their favour. Nor ought we to be surprised at this after seven years of privations and of misery, which taught them that the poor and the industrious are destitute of work from the moment when the rich are forced, as Bailleul has expressed it, to *wear the uniform of mediocrity*. Incredible as it may appear, one of the most ferocious Jacobins

endeavoured to render himself popular by repelling with indignation the idea of the spoliation proposed. "Who is this *curator-general*," said the Deputy Poul-tier, in his Journal, "who would employ twenty thousand subaltern agents, by whom the produce of the sales would be consumed in expenses of management and in peculation? What would be left for the unfortunate proprietors but misery, degradation, and despair? You will send them, you say, some national merchandise! Alas! what an *atrocious pleasantry*!"

But the *atrocious* of this *pleasantry* would not have withheld the Directory from putting it in force, had it been possible to point out a method of preventing the value of the confiscated lands from vanishing at the moment of seizure, or (which was no less difficult) of emitting some new species of paper, some fictitious circulating medium, without the aid of which, the purses of the *bidders* being absolutely empty, the putting the lands up to sale would be totally useless. What do I say? The Directory would have had to struggle against a much more insurmountable obstacle—the general opposition of the unexiled French citizens, whose fortunes are placed out in mortgages on the estates of the nobles proposed to be plundered. To calculate the whole force of this new obstacle, we must not forget, 1st. That the lands and houses already taken from the royalists were charged with a debt to the republicans of *a milliard*; and that, after having sold them, or rather given them away, the nation, who had imprudently taken that debt *upon itself*, reimbursed this body of creditors, by first inscribing

them for that sum in the Great Book, and thereby cancelling two thirds of these inscriptions, and lastly by declaring that it is impossible for them to pay the interest of the remaining consolidated third, otherwise than in *bons*. In a word, such is now the fate of these republican creditors, who were the other day advocates for confiscation, that the value of their new claims on the state does not amount (even in principal) to as much as the fifty millions of interest which the emigrants owed and paid them. Is it not evident then, that I did not exceed the bounds of truth when, four years ago, I asserted that *while they thought to rob their enemies, they were in fact robbing themselves, and were deceived in imagining the nation would pay off their mortgages?*

Certainly when I hazarded this prediction, I was far from suspecting a fact, the confession of which has been extorted from the plunderers by the urgency of affairs. If we believe them, the nobility that have emigrated were so embarrassed with debts, that even had their estates been sold at their former prices, it is doubtful whether the produce would have covered their mortgages. “It is still *problematical*,” said Lecouteulx, in the sitting of the 20th July 1798, “whether the confiscated estates of the emigrants amount, according to their value in 1790, to the aggregate of their debts. It is much to be feared that the burden of these *confiscations* of property will ultimately fall on the *creditors* of the proprietors.”

It can hardly be conceived how Lecouteulx could suggest such fears under the modest form of a *problem*; since, if the debts of the emigrants were al-

most equal to the value of their estates, at the time when they sold for thirty years' purchase, they must then have considerably exceeded it, since these estates have fallen in value so much that the hotels and palaces for which the republic received *twenty-two thousand livres*, were perhaps charged with twenty-two *millions* in mortgages, before the proprietors were put to flight.

This then is the summary of the insurmountable obstacles which oppose the revival of this kind of confiscation; namely, that the treasury have gained infinitely less than the republican *creditors* of the emigrants have lost\*; that in seizing

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\* It is scarcely necessary to say, that the statement of Lecouteulx was an exaggeration evidently intended to divert the compassion of the people from the emigrants to their *creditors*, and to make them believe, that all the luxury the nobility formerly displayed, was the effect of court favour, and consequently sprang from the sweat of the poor. But the documents relative to the quantity and value of the confiscated lands are hitherto so incomplete, that Lecouteulx could not adduce any fact in support of his strange assertion, and therefore he was careful to suggest it merely in the form of a *problem*.

After having investigated, with the greatest attention, every thing that has been written on the subject, the result, which I can with some confidence present to the public, though merely as a conjecture, is as follows:

The confiscated estates taken from the clergy, the crown, the princes, colleges, hospitals, federalists, and other individuals, whether emigrants or not, formed a third, or at least a fourth, of all that class of property, and produced to their lawful possessors a net annual revenue of above 300 millions; about one sixth of which consisted in feudal rights, ground-rents, &c.

This net revenue of 300 millions, valued at twenty-eight or thirty years' purchase, represented a capital, before the revolution, of eight or nine milliards.

But these confiscated estates were charged with a debt of about two milliards, near half of which was mortgaged to those of the French who emigrated, and the other half to those who remained under the jurisdiction of the republic. Johannot asserted, that a million of individuals had declared themselves *creditors* of the emigrants; and several official reports prove that their claims amount to

their prey, they reduced those who pay their taxes, to a state of misery; that new expropriations causing a still greater fall in the price of land, would diminish the produce of the duties on transfers; that after six years' experience they have found confiscated estates are to them of no real value; and lastly, those which they cannot sell at any price, and which continue under the administration of their agents and commissioners, produce much less to the state than those which have been left in the possession of the nobility. A thousand times have they repented of thus depriving themselves of the regular tribute they would have derived from the lawful proprietors, had they, with a more enlightened avidity, followed the example of Cromwell, who left the English royalists in possession of their estates, to prevent them from being deteriorated and ruined, and imposed every year considerable fines or

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a capital of a milliard, and the annual interest to fifty millions, one third of which the state now pays them in *bons*.

Considering the enormous deterioration of the confiscated estates from the moment they were seized upon, and the feudal rights suppressed, there is every reason to believe that at the time of sale their net income was reduced to one half.

We may, without any risk of exaggeration, assert, that the bulk of confiscated estates within the ancient limits of France, did not sell for more than two years' purchase of their incomes thus reduced, and that in fact the state did not receive for them more than 300 millions in *specie*.

Notwithstanding so small a sum has been received for them of the purchasers, yet it is true this grand spoliation has produced about *five milliards effective value*. We must not however forget that it was from the paper circulation that this immense subsidy was derived, and that it is not the purchasers of confiscated lands that have sacrificed that amount. On the contrary, they are the only parties who have gained by the depreciation of the assignats, which fell so much the heavier on the rest of the nation. This last circumstance explains the dreadful impoverishment of the people, especially of those who having abstained from taking part in this national plunder, yet were unable to avoid receiving the assignats.



ransoms on the possessors. If to all these circumstances we add the certainty of the Directory, that on the one hand they can no longer find capitalists to purchase; and that, on the other, the confiscated estates would be four times as valuable, were they but half as extensive; we shall readily perceive their motive for voluntarily declaring against all new confiscations, and eagerly rejecting the illusory riches offered them by the Abbé Sieyès.

I repeat it; had the Directory been blind enough to have attempted this new plunder, it is more than doubtful whether all their power and authority, combined with that of both the Councils, could have overcome the opposition of those whose fortunes were invested in mortgages on the devoted lands, and who are now aware that *on them would ultimately fall all the burden of the confiscation of the estates of their debtors*. As the families who began by being the accomplices, and ended by being the dupes and victims of the former confiscations, will no longer lend their aid to the plunderers; as in seizing the lands of the nobility, the latter can no longer be seconded by the *tiers état*; as soon as these auxiliaries fail them, it becomes almost impossible to proceed to new confiscations, even if they had not abandoned that system from motives of self-interest.

It would be a great mistake to consider as a measure of finance the last decree, confiscating the property of those among the exiles who do not appear in person to receive their sentence, or who shall find means to escape from the noxious spot to which they are banished. This decree was thundered out in a moment of rage and vexation, on hearing of the

escape of Pichegru, whose energy, popularity, and talents are more dreaded by the regicides, than that of all the victims of the 18th Fructidor; he being the only one who has acquired a reputation free from every stain, in that revolutionary drama, which has annihilated every other character, by exposing it to the twofold crucible of prosperity and adversity.

Hence those who proposed this new confiscation, were far from intimating that the revenue would derive the smallest advantage from it; and the Deputy Rouchon, who so boldly attacked it, did not even take the trouble to oppose it in this point of view, which he would not have failed to do, had he not been certain that the interests of the revenue were no part of the object of the measure\*. We may not

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\* After having declared that this measure would give a mortal blow to public credit, he opposed it by arguments of a very different nature; and although they have but a remote analogy with the subject of which we are treating, yet the reader will feel an interest in contemplating the striking contrast afforded by the manly energy of this worthy deputy, and the debasing passions of his colleagues. The following is the question he addressed to them: "*What would you think of a legislator who would say to a man condemned to die, Come to the guillotine of your own accord, or you shall be put on the rack, and drawn and quartered?*" Examine the records of history, and you will see that no tyrant, not even Nero or Heliogabalus, ever had an idea of punishing any man because he did not come to demand execution of his sentence. What then shall we say when such a proposition is accompanied with the words *justice, humanity, and clemency*? I confess it makes my hair stand on end. It is striking the poniard into their bosoms, with the Sardonic grin of malice. I demand that a stop may be put both to the proscriptions and their effects." Here the Moniteur states that many of the members *murmured, and a great number even LAUGHED*. "Representatives," said Rouchon, "I should understand your *laugh* if the subject were pardon: I understand it not when the subject is punishment."

This deputy returned to the charge three days after, and so strenuously opposed this system of progressive and accumulative punishment, that Bailleul and his satellites knew not what to reply. After a moment of silence, Rouchon cast his eyes around, and ob-

only defy the Directory to derive 100,000 écus from all the real estates of the persons exiled on the 18th Fructidor; but we may even be certain they will lose infinitely more, were it merely that every measure which depreciates the value of land, equally diminishes the produce of the important duties levied on sales and successions, and which alone constitute nearly a fourth part of their ordinary revenues. As to the lands already confiscated and sold, their depreciation seems to have been considerably increased in consequence of the last decree; for in the sitting of the first of December, the Deputy Fauvel moved, "That it be prohibited to make any *distinction*, in the *advertisements* for sale, between *national* and *patrimonial* property; a difference which ought never to be so much as named among the true friends of liberty."

#### REQUISITIONS IN KIND.

The internal state of France is so little known, and its changes are so rapid, that many persons imagine that if the Directory suffer the proprietors of land to retain possession of their estates, it is merely for the sake of seizing more abundant crops upon them whenever they think proper, and because *requisitions in kind* are now as productive to the revenue as sequestrations were formerly.

It is however an established fact, that since the

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serving every countenance inexorable, cried out in an accent of despair, "WHAT! does no one support my motion?"

No one dared either to support or oppose it; and the *Moniteur* of the 12th November, No. 52, concludes the debate thus: "Rouchon.—*There is no longer any one deserving the name of a man in this assembly.*"

revolution of the 18th Fructidor, at which period their necessities became more urgent than ever, they have refrained from all kinds of *requisitions*, both in old France, and in the incorporated departments. On this point at least they have shown themselves to have been sincere in the message in which they announced that *this measure is always baneful*. Far from again recurring to it, they have incessantly repeated to the Councils, that the only method of creating a public revenue without placing the governed in a state of warfare with the governors, was to renounce direct taxes levied on the individual, who is always inclined to refuse them, and to substitute in their place indirect taxes (on consumption), which are gradually confounded with the price of the article, and which the consumer pays without perceiving it, whenever he purchases the smallest portion of those articles.

What induced the Directory so suddenly to renounce the system of *requisitions*, was their perceiving they had given the most fatal blow to agriculture, and had been the cause of their own distress by seizing the productive capital, in lieu of taking the superfluity of the produce; that a government, like an individual, when they have lost their credit, and dissipated all they can make away with, must be contented to live upon their income; and that being arrived at that period, it is as impossible to levy at the same time requisitions and taxes on the farmers, as it is to make the vines yield two harvests in a year. In 1796, when, after having put their wine-cellars and granaries in requisition, government had the ef-

frontery to send forth the collector of taxes, he was every where repelled with this speech, which Johannot quoted, when he caused the requisitions to be abolished, and those of 1796 refunded: *How is it possible we should pay our taxes, when you have taken from us the whole of our crops?*

It is true that when the constitutional government attempted to prolong this *extra-legal* system, they were not yet in the receipt of the major part of the legal contributions, by means of which they now drag on a precarious existence. But what induced them so strongly to urge the organization of the regular taxes in money, was, that the collectors disappointed their avidity by plundering the greater part of the corn that was taken in kind. "They learnt," says Adrien Lezay, "by dear-bought experience, that it is more expensive to violate than to protect property; and that the money taken by force, though it departs from the hand of its present possessors, never comes into that of the public treasury, because there is a third intermediate party that takes each of them, and leaves nothing in either."

Such is the lesson that forced them to tread back their steps towards regular taxation; and immediately after the 18th Fructidor, at which period their janissaries might more easily have recommenced these levies in kind, the Directory immediately revealed to the Councils that the *requisitions devoured those resources which might be rendered permanently useful* \*.

Thus, we perceive, these resources which the requi-

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\* Message of the 26th September 1797.

fications *devour*, are the legal contributions; and every one knows, these can only be rendered *permanently useful*, that is, productive, when they are previously decreed, assessed on the people in proportion to their power to pay, and collected in a manner that is secure from arbitrary oppression. This confession of the Directory is a sufficient proof that they renounced the *requisitions* merely through a regard to their own interest, and that if they are obliged to recur to them, so desperate a step will rather demonstrate their expiring weakness, than their increasing strength.

They will, however, be obliged by necessity to recur to it, should their armies be driven back towards the frontiers, as those of Jourdan and Moreau were in 1797; and no doubt such new requisitions in kind will supply them with provisions during a certain time: but it is not enough to provision an army; it will soon be disbanded, should the supply of their accoutrements and ammunition (and; above all, their pay) fail for any length of time: and to prevent this, would be out of the power of those whom it still continues to obey.

It is difficult to conceive how suddenly requisitions in kind, and all other unexpected levies, arrest the progress of reproduction, and exhaust the revenue, however rich it may be. Were it possible, for instance, that Bonaparte or Massena should ever gain a footing in England, and should they *tax* it in their accustomed manner, their *fusillades* and their threats of calling down *thunder* and *fire from heaven* upon the people of Great Britain, would not, during many

years of *terror*, unless they should be able to *take* every thing, even household furniture, away, levy one fourth of the subsidies obtained by Mr. Pitt, since the commencement of the war, with the talisman of *credit*, and the lever of the *law*.

#### FORCED LOANS.

“ To govern a people, and procure money for the expenses of the state, there exist but two methods; to extort by terror, or obtain by confidence. The first of these is *worn out*, as the government experienced when they attempted to recur to it. Should they again place France beneath the *revolutionary press*, in order to extract her *last juices*, torrents of blood would be shed before a single grain of gold would be produced. The laws have given the signal for it to hide its head; and the more it is pursued, the farther it will fly.”

Thus spoke Adrien Lezay, in 1796; since which period all the laws intended to *obtain money* by *confidence*, have been without effect. Let us examine whether the successors of Robespierre are able to supply its place by means of *terror*.

Doubtless they would seize on all personal property, had their precursor left them any yet to discover. But no; the royal repository (the garde-meuble), the diamonds of the royal family, the plate of individuals, the treasures of the churches, the hospital poor-boxes, have all been successively put up to sale, in the name of the nation, or pillaged by the Jacobins; and every thing is now consumed or divided among the great crowd of plunderers. The Direc-

tory may now look around them in vain, for there no longer exist any masses of property worth the seizure. The stock of the East India Company, that of the Caisse d'Escompte, the savings of the corporations, the money of the colleges, and even the property of minors—what is there but has disappeared under the tyranny of the founders of this devouring republic? Of all these branches of capital, whether real or fictitious, scarcely any vestiges remain but the pages of the Great Book.

But it will be said, perhaps, that the case is very different with regard to specie, which, in fact, is not much scarcer, but only more generally *disseminated* than before, as was observed by Lecouteulx. It is this very *dissemination* that banishes all hopes of its being accessible for a long time to come; for it is certain, there is nothing which the French know so well how to conceal, at the present, as their money. I can even adduce sufficient proof, that since the 18th Fructidor they have again begun to export it, or bury it in the earth. This proof is derived not only from the excessive rise in the price paid for bills of exchange on foreign countries, and in that of the rate of discount, but also from the relative prices of gold and silver before the revolution, during its progress, and since the events of the 18th Fructidor.

And here I must request the reader to accompany me in a short digression, which may furnish him with an excellent thermometer, whereby, at all times, to judge of the degree of confidence or distrust placed by the people of Paris in their leaders. It is evident, that the relative price of gold and silver depends on



their respective abundance or scarcity; and as this has not much varied in Europe during the last twelve years, every thing shows, that their comparative value in France would, independent of the revolution, have continued nearly at the rate according to which M. de Calonne regulated the new coinage \*, and at which it still continues throughout the rest of Europe, where fine gold generally costs  $15\frac{1}{3}$ ,  $15\frac{1}{2}$ , or  $15\frac{2}{3}$  times its weight in fine silver. Under Robespierre, the price of gold at Paris rose to  $16\frac{1}{2}$ ; and soon after, when Pichegru and Barthelemy were at the head of affairs, fell a trifle lower; whereas, since their trans-

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\* Previous to the new coinage that took place in his administration, and with which his countrymen have so unjustly reproached him, four French crowns contained of fine silver  $14\frac{2}{3}$  times the weight of pure gold in a louis d'or; and as the value of gold relatively to silver had in fact increased throughout Europe since the year 1726, when this proportion was first adopted, M. de Calonne acted very wisely in retrenching something from the weight of the louis. Perhaps he went a little too far in altering it to the proportion of 1 to  $15\frac{1}{2}$ ; but I am inclined to think the French system of coinage then became the most perfect throughout Europe, as that of Great Britain has continued the most defective ever since the end of the last century, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer Montague ordered a new silver coinage, without making the same alteration as M. de Calonne introduced in France with respect to the gold coin.

Every thing, however, now shows, that it is too late to alter the present English standard; and that, at the general pacification, the market-price of gold and silver will be, throughout Europe, very nearly in the proportion of 1 to  $15\frac{1}{3}$ , as settled under Queen Elizabeth. But the system of coinage in England, which is so much admired in France, is extremely defective in almost all its branches; and were it not for the invention and the success of bank notes, its defects would long since have provoked a reform. Such a reform cannot be effectual unless it be complete; and I am very doubtful whether it would be prudent to enter upon it till all the old channels of commerce are again opened on the continent, or till we know the influence which the French revolution will continue to have on the relative value of gold and silver, after having caused vast quantities of the former to be buried in the earth, and of the latter to be carried to the mint.

portation, it has gradually risen to 17. The rate stated in the last Paris papers is far more important than is at first imagined, because it shows the extent of the sacrifices made by monied men to place their property beyond the reach of the ministers of terror \*. If to obtain *one* pound weight of fine gold, which at London is now worth only  $15\frac{1}{2}$  pounds of fine silver, the Parisians submit to pay 17, this sacrifice clearly arises from the pound of gold, through the superior specific gravity of that metal, occupying little more than half as much space as a pound of silver; and therefore the same nominal sum requiring but  $\frac{1}{30}$ th or  $\frac{1}{34}$ th as much space as it would in silver, may the easier escape the notice of the government and of their spies. When the distrust excited by the latter is sufficient to induce men to give so high a *premium*, all the measures requisite to defeat their oppressions are taken beforehand; they have no further means of seizing gold and silver, and on the first attempt to grasp at them, the little specie that still continues in circulation is instantly buried in the bowels of the earth.

All this equally applies to *forced loans*, if the Directory had the effrontery to attempt one after the

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\* In the Paris papers of February 1799 fine silver is quoted at fifty livres fifteen sous *per mark*, and fine gold at 106 livres ten sous *per ounce*. Hence it follows, that eight ounces of gold, which compose a mark, cost 852 livres, or nearly seventeen marks of silver. Hence too it appears, how profitable it would be to melt all the louis of full weight that can be procured, in order to exchange the gold for écus at the rate of  $15\frac{1}{2}$ , to be resold at the rate of 17 in the form of gold ingots. It is to this that I alluded in p. 197, when speaking of the necessity of leaving the louis to be sold at a market-price, however disastrous that measure may prove.

decree of the 31st December 1797, which cancelled the *coupons*, or receipts, given to the lenders of the preceding year \*. Besides, we ought not to suffer ourselves to be the dupes of high-sounding words. The pretended *voluntary donations*, solicited at the beginning of 1798, were, as Le Brun very justly observed, no other than a *forced loan*; and as they only produced about a *thousand livres per day* to the national treasury, while the daily expenditure amounts to nearly *three millions*, no great effect can be expected from such an attempt, should it be again recurred to.

Can it then be needful to say more, to prove that terror has lost its productive power; that were the *revolutionary press* again placed upon such a country, no more *juices* would be found to come forth; that

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\* The decree that set this loan on foot contained a solemn promise to accept one *tenth* of the *coupons*, or receipts, in payment of the taxes during each of the ten following years. The minister Ramel having, in his memoir of the 2d August 1797, complained, that *this engagement would deduct more than thirty millions from the revenue of every one of those years*, this was sufficient to induce the Councils to relieve him from that engagement though of their own formation, by decreeing, that the *eight last coupons of the forced loan should not be accepted in payment of the contributions, but should be considered as part of the national debt*.

I shall conclude what I have to say on the subject of this forced loan of 600 millions, which I foretold would only produce 200 millions, with the confession which the chairman, Cr  tet, made, in order to involve all the subscribers, without distinction, in the great national bankruptcy. *The forced loan*, said he, *which has produced a NOMINAL mass of THREE HUNDRED millions, has not yielded more than ONE HUNDRED millions in SPECIE*.

Assuredly it would have scarcely produced *ten*, had not the subscribers been allowed thus to get rid of their assignats: and even to induce them to make this sacrifice, it was necessary to persuade them, that by thus throwing three fourths of the paper they held into the fire, they would raise the value of what remained in the same proportion; an idea so completely chimerical, that even after that period the assignats fell from twenty-nine to thirty.

its plunderers having deprived themselves of the resources of credit by the decree which so inconsiderately proclaimed the legality of bankruptcies, they are compelled to return within the narrow track of regular taxation, and to be contented with those imposts which they may be able to levy on an exhausted nation, who have become unhabituated to pay them, and who take as much pains to elude them as they show resignation in suffering themselves to be robbed of their civil and political rights? What would the great Montesquieu say, could he witness this extraordinary phænomenon among his countrymen, since they have called themselves patriots and *republicans*? he who had advanced as an axiom under the monarchical government, "that a nation may easily suffer new taxes to be levied; but when they are *insulted*, they feel nothing but the injury done them, and consider every possible evil as involved in the insult they suffer."

From the year 1795, when the legislators of France continued to menace the coalition with a further display of their revolutionary resources, and when, exulting in their inexhaustible riches, they still cried out, *Is Europe to be sold* \*? I ventured to predict, that the total of the regular taxes, which they then began to reorganize, would not, in the year 1796, procure them a revenue equal to the additional taxes Mr. Pitt would that year levy on the people of England. I was then opposed by a late minister of the French finances, who reproached me with a *grand mistake in not considering the unlimited extent of REVOLUTIONARY*

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\* Meaning, that they were rich enough to purchase it.

EXPEDIENTS. *Whoever, added he, is sufficiently convinced, that they exceed, both in FORCE and EXTENSIVENESS, all LEGITIMATE and REGULAR resources, would not feed himself with CHIMERAS.*

It is surprising, that, while boasting of their *force* and *extensiveness*, this writer should forget to notice their *DURATION*. But having supplied this singular omission, let us see whether it is the French or the English financiers that have fed themselves with *chimeras*.

Towards the month of August 1798, at the very time when Bailleur was deploring so bitterly the *impoverishment* of the people of France; the emptiness of the treasury, and, above all, the loss of *credit*, which has deprived the government of all hopes of filling up the deficit by means of loans, Mr. Pitt, who was able to borrow as much money as he wanted at six *per cent.* voluntarily abandoned that mode, and resolved to demand, within the year, a considerable part of the extraordinary expenses of the war from the people of England; to whose taxes it has already added between eight and nine millions sterling annually. Yes; such is the *force*, the *extent*, and, above all, the *DURATION* of the *legitimate* and *regular* resources, that this nation has suffered without the least murmur, a further increase of ten millions sterling for the years 1799 and 1800; so that twice the annual sum is paid in taxes that was levied seven years ago, when other nations thought the English overwhelmed with burdens. It is very remarkable, that since that period the general produce of the old taxes has visibly increased; but what is still more remarkable, and deserves to be proclaimed aloud throughout all Europe,

that every one may be upon his guard against the *chimera of revolutionary expedients*, the British parliament voted and organized this vast additional tax of 250 millions of livres tournois in the short space of a month; whereas, for the four last years, the representatives of the revolutionized nation have held near a thousand sittings to decree and organize a permanent public revenue, the total produce of which does not exceed *one half* or two thirds of a million *per day*.

This ever-memorable triumph of legitimate ways and means over revolutionary expedients, has been placed in a strong point of view by a noble orator and a great statesman in the House of Peers; who having represented the striking contrast of the increasing prosperity of the people of England, and the progressive poverty of the French, added, "The contrast, my Lords, is obvious, and offers itself to our attention. I see it with complacency and with pride. It is a pardonable pride, and of a good and moral tendency. Englishmen derive, from their consciousness of being Englishmen, an elevation of mind, which, both to the present race and to posterity, will operate as an incessant encouragement to national virtue and to RIGHT EXERTIONS. *Vera gloria radices agit, atque etiam propagatur* \*."

But to return to the people of France. I flatter myself I have shown, that even were they as conscientious in paying all their taxes as they are skilful in evading them; were they to entertain as much respect and devotion for their leaders as they feel horror

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\* Lord Auckland's speech on the 8th January. 1799.

and contempt, it would be morally impossible for them to pay half, or perhaps a third of the subsidies required even for a peace establishment, under the present expensive form of government; that after having clandestinely taken their capitals from them by means of assignats; after having suspended all their useful industry, to substitute war in its place, and exhausted their sources of income to the very dregs, their oppressors are condemned, without hopes of redemption, to a deficit that prepares the way for their downfall, which they have only deferred by plundering Holland, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland.

It is only since the annihilation of the paper circulation that this consequence has been discoverable; and if many have deceived themselves on this point, their error has arisen from their having forgotten, that the ravages of the deficit would not appear till it had vitiated the whole circulation of the body politic. But these horrid symptoms are now appearing every where. Whoever closely observes this republic, which is so triumphant abroad, will perceive it to be rapidly falling to ruin and dissolution at home, and may easily assign for the termination of its conquests and its triumphs the period when the neutral powers, whom France still continues to keep in awe by talking of her *inexhaustible resources*, shall be convinced that no others are left her but the new plunder she expects from them by separately and successively attacking them.

Nor let it be thought that I am guilty of exaggeration, when I point out the deficit as a mortal dis-

case. It is by no means the only one that threatens that monstrous government with destruction : but as this evil redoubles the activity of each of the others, as it banishes even the possibility of palliatives, they may all be considered as concentrated and included in the *impoverishment* which daily erodes the vitals of the French republic. It is not therefore without reason that the Directory complain, that the republic is wounded to the *heart* by the refusal of the subsidies demanded ; and that the shrewdest of their satellites proclaim, that *the finances are the soul and the vital breath, that cannot expire without a total dissolution* \* ; or, that of all the calamities with which a country can be afflicted, the disorder of the finances is the greatest †.

It is only by recapitulating the principal *calamities* that arise from this disorder, that we can perceive the justice of the above comparison, and that the finances are to the political body what the heart is to the human frame, where it is the first principle of life and motion, by pumping, as it were, the blood from the veins, and forcing it into the whole arterial system.

If the bankruptcy decreed in September 1797 has reduced near a million of the inhabitants of France to beggary, what justification is it to say, with those deputies who gave the sanction of the law to this truly *national* ignominy, “ that it is merely on account of *financial distress*, that the enemies of the republic still entertain some hopes—that they are perfectly well informed of the internal situation of France,

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\* Jacqueminot.

† Bailleul.



which it is necessary to meliorate by *getting rid of an enormous mass of interest* \*—by banishing the spectre of a debt neither *funded* nor *fundable*—that every body politic which is oppressed by a public debt greater than it can bear, is considered as in a state of *decline* that *invites* the invasion of its neighbours—that the promises made to the public creditors were always subordinate to the *possibility of paying*, without which both promises and securities are mere *illusions* †—in short, that there exists a *moral impossibility* of adding to the existing taxes, or even of continuing them at their present rate during many years ‡—and that, in such a situation of affairs, *national justice has its limits* § ?”

If, after having thus passed a decree of national bankruptcy, as an act of *national justice*, the public faith has again been violated with regard to the *third* that was suffered to remain; if, during the year vi. not even a single écu has been paid to the lesser stockholders, to whom the country was pledged by a decree to pay something more than this third, let us but hear what these bankrupts say themselves: “ *The urgency of their circumstances becomes their excuse* ||; irresistible necessity has decreed the contrary; the budget, which appropriated certain funds to this purpose, *has not proved so productive as was expected; it was rather imaginary than real* ¶.”

If the same want of faith has been practised towards the wounded and mutilated soldiers, towards the 25,000 reformed officers, and the widows and children

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\* Villers.    † Crétet.    ‡ Monnot.    § Villers.  
 || Vernier.    ¶ Villers.

of those who have fallen in battle, the treasury and the Directory justify themselves by saying, *that funds were provided for these objects only in appearance, and to add difficulties to difficulties—that it has been attempted to oppose, under colour of an hypocritical popularity, all the resources the government were desirous of creating to answer their emergencies; that much time has been consumed either in calculating eventual receipts, subordinate to future laws which were not enacted, or in declaiming against projects more or less advantageous, without substituting others in their place* \*.

If the republican government daily alienates, or is deserted by that crowd of partisans who originally supported them in their usurpation, this arises from the Directory no longer having assignats to feed their enthusiasm by keeping them in pay; and from this paper circulation, which was the *first spring of the independence of the republic, having now become the principle of its languishing decay* †.

If the Councils complain of the *indifference and the incapacity, the discouragement and the disorganization, of the municipalities, the report which states the numerous inconveniences thence arising, attributes them solely to this cause; that it is notorious, that since the establishment of the constitutional government (that is, since the fall of the assignats), the members of the municipal administrations HAVE RECEIVED NO SALARIES* ‡.

\* Redacteur of the 5th and 9th September.

† Arnould.

‡ Demoore.

If the judges are *bought and sold*, of which the Directory accuse them, their accusers have equally discovered the source of this venality; for they confess these judges *are not paid* \*.

If this *venality* appears without disguise in the officers of the government, if Tallien himself complains of the *want of principle in all the clerks*, the real cause is, that *the imperious voice of necessity has long been corrupting their hearts*.

If the police is wholly inactive at Lyons, at Bourdeaux, at Toulouse, the deputies from those cities declare, the blame must be imputed *to the want of funds*; that, to establish a police in populous towns as active as the immorality of the inhabitants requires, it is indispensably necessary to *pay* the commissaries, agents, and runners of the police, who *have received nothing during eighteen months*.

If the hospitals for foundlings are mere living tombs; if no nurses can be found; if, *during the*

\* Laujacq has lately declared that most of the judges are resigning, that at the new elections no candidates will offer, and that France will soon be destitute of tribunals. "We can no longer," says he, "behold with indifference the situation of the judges of the republic. We are arriving at a *fatal* period, when the *tribunals will be absolutely abandoned*. May that destiny which watches over our country, falsify my *prediction*! If the salary due to the judges be not *paid* within two months, the judicial power may be *annihilated*.—But where, it will be said, can we raise the necessary funds? We must raise them from the *economies* which are so often talked of, and so rarely realized." This *prediction* was pronounced on the 31st December 1798.

Such are the auspices under which the year 1799 has commenced for a government which still continues to talk of its *inexhaustible* resources! What then will be their condition in the year 1800, even admitting that in the interval the French republic should be able to support the war by means of the war itself?

*year VI. a great number of the sick and indigent have died in the hospitals for want of BROTH AND OF BREAD; this must be attributed to the Directory not having been liberated from the tyrannical yoke of necessity; for, as Ramel expressed himself, had the taxes been punctually paid, the minister of the interior might have granted relief to the hospitals\*.*

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\* The most convincing proof how much the evils suffered by the republic depend on the finances, and which still further increases that of the distress felt by the hospitals, is, that the small sums that can be appropriated to them are wholly swallowed up by a crowd of subordinate agents who have nothing to do, and yet cannot be discharged on account of the impossibility of paying what is due to them. Of these the hospitals of Paris alone have no less than 2972, whose salaries amount to 900,000 livres a year, which is precisely the sum of which the minister of the interior had the disposal in the year VI. for the relief of the sick at Paris, who, as Garat informs us, found the hospitals of the metropolis *the abodes of misery and of every species of agony*. How can we, without being filled with grief and indignation, peruse the letter addressed by the administrators of these hospitals to the committee of finances! "Order would soon be every where restored, if we could receive a sufficient sum to discharge that swarm of agents who devour and degrade the hospitals, and who, not having received any salary during more than fifteen months, think themselves entitled to live at the expense of these establishments, as they cannot be discharged without being paid, and in the mean while their salaries are going on. This measure once accomplished, order, economy, and decency, would be restored in the hospitals; but till that is done, they will continue to be a scene of plunder, of disorder, and of crimes."

This description of the state of the hospitals is a faithful picture of the disorder that prevails in most other administrations throughout France, where all the agents and clerks *pay themselves*: and this is what Bailleul alluded to when he said, that *wherever there is a want of money, it is extremely difficult to restore order*.

The minister of the interior has published, on the 20th January 1799, a circular, wherein he bewails the distress of the hospitals and public charities. He declares—that they are in the most afflicting situation—that they are in a state of penury that would wound the most insensible of hearts—that their distress has arisen to the utmost height, and that it would be an outrage upon suffering humanity to defer relieving them for a single moment. He then adds, that "Although the law of the 11th Frimaire enacts, that until the municipal administrations are possessed of sufficient funds to provide for the expenses of this establishment, the

If the rising generation is deprived of every kind of instruction, and left to grovel in ignorance and barbarism \* ; if, as Briot has complained, they are now no better than an impure horde of assassins, who are become the reproach of the republic: in short, if one of his colleagues proposes to remedy this evil by a better provision for the masters of the primary schools, the minister of that department eagerly declares, that the *eventual credits* hitherto granted him are far from sufficient to pay these masters those salaries which are even represented as too inconsiderable. He repeats, that he has received for those *credits* only imaginary

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necessary sums shall be furnished by the public treasury, the circumstances in which we are placed do not admit of our looking forward to the possibility of complying with this clause but at a distant period."

\* Thus it was that Bonnaire expressed himself in the sitting of the 6th November 1798 : and on the 29th January 1799 he added, " We have not a moment to lose ; the inhabitants of the country are immersed in barbarism. We must rescue them from this deplorable state, and raise them in their own eyes. We want tutors ! These we must form, and afford them a respectable subsistence." The finances alone can no longer be deferred, said the same speaker, a few days before, when he announced this motion ; in which he was strenuously supported by Leclerc, who cried out, *You must, above all things, employ your attention on the finances and public instruction ; but let the finances TAKE THE LEAD.* This, no doubt, is the natural order of things, and yet it appears hardly possible any longer to defer the business of the national education, for Heurtaut observed, as long ago as the 26th June 1798, that " however numerous the laws on this head might be, yet they were not the less incomplete ; that they were mere *direction-posts* placed at great intervals, and leading to a desert." But what more than all alarms the republican Bonnaire, and causes him so loudly to complain, when he considers the present state of the primary schools, is, that every moment of delay erases a crowd of the inhabitants of France from the future catalogue of citizens. This fear is founded on the constitutional act, which enacts, that from the year xii. every Frenchman who cannot read and write shall be erased from the list of citizens : and it is highly probable, that, should the constitution exist at that period, an obedience to this article will place France under the dominion of a very limited aristocracy.

*value, mere empty ciphers traced out on paper; and the Directory carefully add, that the law which fixed these credits for the coming year is but a mere indication.*

*If the great roads are out of repair and impassable, and if the consequence of this is a miserable stagnation of all traffic, the Directory equally point out as the cause of this evil, that for many years nothing has been done in this department, nor any money paid.*

*If the two Councils inquire the cause of the numerous robberies committed on these roads, the Directory reply, that these robberies are the first signal of a civil war; that there are scarcely three thousand men of the gendarmerie mounted throughout the republic; and that this evil arises in a great measure from the great blanks that still exist in the system of the finances\*.*

*If, on learning that a serious insurrection had broken out in Belgium, the Councils apply to the Directory to know the real state of affairs in the Low Countries, and the remedy of the evil, they still answer, "that it arises from the intrigues of England; and that they can never expect to put a stop to these movements, so long as they shall not have secret funds at their disposal sufficient to create the means of discovering and counterworking all her manœuvres—they declare, that a sum of a million and a half is indispensably necessary for this object†.*

*If a few of the deputies venture to complain of scandalous contracts, the Directorial party silence them by saying, "that economy in these contracts is*

\* Message of the 6th December 1797.

† Message of the Directory of the 2d November 1798,

*impossible*, so long as the national treasury shall not be in a condition to pay ready money to the contractors, who must necessarily be compensated for the risk they run by accepting *ordonnances*, the payment of which is so *precarious*—that the contractors exact such *indemnities* (prices) as are proportioned to the value of their advances, and the *risk naturally attending on a POWERFUL DEBTOR* \*.”

If a general outcry is raised against the multiplicity of bankruptcies; if it is complained that they become more and more frequent, even among those classes of merchants who have no connexions with the government, Bailleul represents, that *whatever endeavours men exert to insulate themselves, it is impossible to avoid all kinds of connexion, direct or indirect, with the exchequer, or to escape the shock of its motion, which, beginning from the centre of the state, extends its effects to every point of the circumference, affects every branch of affairs, and penetrates into all the asyums of fortune, of labour, and of industry* †.

\* *Craffons*.

† Almost all the Paris papers that have arrived while the present work has been in the press are full of new facts and new statements, which prove, that, so far from having indulged, in the preceding chapters, in the smallest exaggeration, I have kept far within the line of truth.

Among other things it there appears, that at the very time when I was expressing my surprise with regard to the two *Caissees d'Escomptes*, and the continuance of the credit given to their paper, the principal of those banks stopped payment. But a still greater evil attended this suspension, which might easily have been foreseen, and which it was highly important to prevent, since it served as a signal, and afforded a pretext, to innumerable trades-people, from one end of the country to the other, to *stop payment, though their coffers were full*.

This is the language of the Deputy Pollard, when complaining of the *concerted coincidence* they seem to have pursued in their failures;

If, though the tax on tobacco was decreed *in principle* more than a year ago, the two Councils have not

on which occasion he delivered, on the 28th December 1798, the following speech:

" I am come to this tribune to denounce the numerous and immense bankruptcies that daily multiply with dreadful rapidity; and which, extending through all the ramifications of commerce, threaten ultimately to swallow up and destroy it. From the moment these bankruptcies broke out at Paris, they began to be immediately felt at Marseilles, Bourdeaux, Lyons, Rouen, Nantz, and even at Orleans, the paper of which last had been esteemed the most secure. I admit that commerce had previously suffered much, and that the fear of a renewal of the war with the coalesced powers has given a mortal blow to credit: but all these events ought to have been long since foreseen. It is true, they may have diminished the number of commercial transactions, but they are not the cause of the bankrupts, with insolent and audacious effrontery, trampling in their phaetons on the misery of those whose ruin they have occasioned. *To fail in every engagement, and give up a statement of their effects, is to them become mere sport.*"

All this is but too probable; but who has given this example to the nation? Is it not their own representatives who have made it mere sport to violate the engagements of the nation? Is it not those who have sanctioned this infamous bankruptcy, as the only means of having their coffers full, and augmenting what they call their indemnities? Is it not those who, after having thus fattened on the spoil of the unfortunate stockholder, behold him with insolent and audacious effrontery, and trample in their tribune on the misery of those whom they have ruined?

In reverting to this iniquitous transaction, it is difficult to say whether we ought to feel more horror at the motives then assigned by these fraudulent bankrupts, or those they now allege in their excuse. The grand argument employed by Villers was as follows: *England will contemplate this operation (the reduction of the dividends to one third of their amount) with envy, for she pants to do the same; but she has not, like you, any national domains to grant.* Incredible as it may appear, Lecouteux, who first suggested the idea of this national infidelity, by representing it as a mere family affair, has lately published a work expressly to accuse Mr. Pitt of having been the cause of this step. If we listen to this French legislator, it is the infernal genius of the British cabinet; it is its malign influence, which, after having so powerfully co-operated in the destruction of Lyons, has influenced the French nation to destroy their national credit for ever.

It is to be remarked that the same Pollard, whom we have before quoted, after having denounced with so much indignation the private fraudulent bankrupts, concluded his speech by exclaiming, *Why*



yet succeeded in reorganizing an eighth part of the thirty-two millions it produced to the monarchy, we must by no means imagine this arises either from the shame of re-establishing for the republican exchequer the old *monopoly* which had been abolished as *odious*, or from that of destroying the private manufactories that have risen upon the ruins of the great royal one: no; it must be accounted for by the necessity of an *advance* of twenty or thirty millions, which would not be returned for several years \*. The treasury is beset and harassed with demands of too pressing a nature to be able to sacrifice any thing to future prospects, however considerable the expected profits may appear. Thus it is that the exhausted state of the finances becomes alternately a cause and an effect, even to the preclusion of restoring a branch of revenue so little burdensome to the people, and which it is in vain attempted to replace by the most vexatious taxes. So true is it, as Bailleur has expressed himself, that *to re-establish the finances is to lay a founda-*

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*Should we conceal the truth from ourselves, and shut our eyes to the intrigues of foreign agents and to the work of Pitt? I accuse the English themselves of causing all these bankruptcies.*

\* This was well explained by Riou in the sitting of the 13th December 1797. He set out with showing, that the proposed decree would ruin the private manufactories; but this object detained him very little, and he added with great simplicity, "Could you, however, deserting considerations of rectitude, but really find your advantage in it! Could you, while reviving the whole monopoly of snuff, but be sure, by that means, of procuring money, and that *speedily*!—But no; while you are waiting for the future prospect of a few millions of annual profit, you would be for the present obliged, however disastrous it might be, to disburse at least twenty millions for the unavoidable expenses of the establishment, and the purchase of the raw materials."

Others of the members proved by calculations, that these unavoidable disbursements would amount to thirty, or even forty millions.

*tion for the prosperity of the nation and the happiness of its citizens!*

If the last invasion of Ireland has ended only in their confusion, the Directory have boldly anticipated the reproaches that might be thrown upon them. They lost no time in announcing that catastrophe; but they added, "that it was preceded by circumstances still more calamitous: for General Hardy could not get those funds into his hands which were assigned to him for the pay of the troops; and the *total want of these aids was the only obstacle to his sailing with the Squadron of Savary* \*.

If the committee of marine declare, that the public monuments fall to decay; that the national edifices are in ruins; that the dykes are bursting, the quays giving way, the light-houses disappearing, and the ports choking up; this arises from the *deficit alone*, say they, and from *that want of funds which has hitherto paralysed the best and the wisest schemes* †.

In short, incredible as it may appear, when the two Councils were hesitating relative to the expediency of sanctioning the infamous bankruptcy proposed to them by the Directory, the latter endeavoured to put an end to their wavering by the following confidential communication, which no doubt made them start from their seats. *Soon you will not,*

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\* See the Redacteur of the 30th October 1798, where it is asserted, that if this Squadron had sailed with the other, *Ireland would have been entirely separated from England*. This article in the Directorial gazette concluded in these words: "How afflicting is it to reflect, that all these evils arise from the *funds ordered by the Directory not having been ready in time, on an occasion of such primary magnitude!*"

† Daubermesnil.

*citizens representatives, be able SECURELY to take a moment's repose in your abodes at Paris, if the repairs which are urgently requisite be not made in the QUARRIES (under Paris) \*.*

This, no doubt, is a bugbear, as well as the complaints of the government relative to the impossibility of their providing for the repairs indispensably requisite in the lazarettes of Marseilles and Toulon †. It is evident they expect, by raising these alarms, to produce a certain effect in the two Councils; and this alone is sufficient to show the real internal state of France.

What an inexhaustible source of reflections! What! after having confiscated the magnificent edifices of the metropolis, and alienated them for the most contemptible sums, the plunderers are reduced to a confession, that they tremble at the prospect of not having it in their power to appropriate the necessary funds to preserve their country from the *plague*, or support the *quarries* that yawn beneath their confiscated

\* Message of the 26th September 1797.

† See the papers transmitted by the officers of health of the lazaretto in the department of the Mouths of the Rhone. "The substance of them," says the *Moniteur* of the 14th July 1798, "is, that the vast enclosures, the immense halls and warehouses of that lazaretto, require to be continually kept up; that this having been long neglected, they cannot be repaired without a sum of about 60,000 livres, which have been frequently *sued for in vain*; and that if the repairs of the port of Pomegue are much longer neglected, the *customs on the Levant trade, and that of Barbary, will in future be wholly unproductive.*"

On hearing these papers read, Marquetry stated, that *the same inconvenience existed at the port of Toulon*: but all these alarming facts did not prevent the Councils from turning a deaf ear to these internal dangers, and giving the minister of marine all the *credits* he required for making a conquest of the Levant trade, by a bold attempt on Malta and Alexandria.

hotels, great part of the city of Paris itself, and the three palaces where the regicides hold their sittings! Yet it is subsequent to this memorable confession that they have allotted themselves *four millions and a half* of additional indemnities or salaries, under pretext that the representatives of the first nation in the world ought to be lodged in a manner *worthy of the glory they have acquired!* In short, they resemble the crew of a wreck, who, having lost all hope of preservation, endeavour to banish the thoughts of their approaching destruction, by devoting their last moments to drunkenness and pillage.

Thus it is, that with this exhausted nation one disorder brings on another; thus it is, that every thing centres in the finances, while the inextricable confusion into which they have fallen produces innumerable evils more and more terrific and alarming. *It can no longer be said, these evils* THREATEN US — *they ARE ACTUALLY DRAGGING ALL THE BRANCHES of the government to DISSOLUTION.* Such was the language of the Directory in their message of the 26th September 1797.

I am at a loss to discover by what train of argument it can be denied, that what is taking place in the interior of the country justifies this outcry of alarm; and I scarcely know whether I ought to be at the pains of replying to that multitude of timid and uninquiring minds, who seriously insist, that we cannot judge of the effects of such disorders; and that the new fiscal art of the French is a species of occult science, wherein it would be useless to attempt to follow them; as if the investigation required any thing more than mere patient attention; as if a more

important object of study could exist for the nations whom the Directory menace with their devastations; or as if it were not evident that they have thus prolonged their own career of plunder, and the apathy of their neighbours, only by gaining possession of their finances through the terror they have excited at the extensiveness of their resources !

These men, however, to justify not only the fear they have felt and propagated of these *revolutionary resources*, but that which they still feel, will doubtless endeavour to invalidate all the documents recorded in this work, by saying, with a tone of incredulity, that these pretended vouchers prove nothing but the perpetual contradictions of the speakers; that the reports I have taken so much pains to collect, generally contain no facts but such as are no facts at all; that the impostors who publish them are intentionally deceiving foreign nations relative to the internal state of France, as they deceive France relative to the dispositions of foreign nations; and that we ought no more to rely on the ill-boding representations of the one, relative to the exhaustion of the republic, than on the boasting of the others relative to their opulence and prosperity. Besides, they will add, we ought never to forget, that the Directory are naturally induced to exaggerate their distresses in their public messages; because these messages are solely intended to obtain decrees for new taxes; and because they can neither procure these, nor even justify the demand, but by showing that a dreadful abyss is yawning beneath the republic; that the party who persist in refusing new subsidies, must also paint in the darkest colours the misery of the people, and their want of power to

support the burden; and that whenever the latter declare they have no more than is *strictly necessary* for themselves, or that their capitals are dissipated, and that all their resources are dried up; then their leaders instantly change their tone, and assert, that these resources are *entire, immense, inexhaustible*; that therefore no inference can be drawn from their harangues, but that they bear all the marks of exaggeration, invalidate themselves, and destroy one another.

But I deny that any exaggeration exists in the documents on which my reasoning is founded when proving the decay of agriculture, the subversion of the colonies, the ruin of the manufactories, the annihilation of commerce, and the stagnation of productive labour. When these official reports are corroborated by the enormous deficit of the public revenue, by the accounts of the treasury, which prove that during the eleven first months of the year VI. the taxes have always yielded less and less, in proportion as new rigours have been invented for levying them, by the subsequent avowal of the Directory and their minister of contributions, who proclaim, that since these are multiplied, *the receipts grow more tardy, that the accounts of the stamp-duties, during the three first months of the year VII. evince a considerable diminution, and that the receipts have not increased since the commencement of the second quarter\**; when we take a survey, I say, of this immense number of authentic and concurrent documents, surely we may

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\* These two confessions may be found in the message of the 15th December 1798, but more particularly in that of the 2d February 1799, of which I shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

be allowed to express our astonishment that they can leave a shadow of a doubt relative to the radically exhausted state of that wretched nation. There is nothing to deduct from this vast catalogue of confessions of their leaders, except their oriental style, which they mistake for the nervous language of liberty, and which will for ever render them the laughing-stock of Europe, as soon as they shall have ceased to be its terror.

There is, however, nothing oriental, nothing declamatory, in the four principal reports: I mean that wherein the commercial deputies declared, that trade is *dragging itself along amidst its own ruins*, and that *the workshops are shut up*; that of Laporte on the stagnation of the manufactures; that wherein Baillet has displayed the calamitous influence of the national bankruptcy on commerce and agriculture; and that wherein Lecouteulx portrayed the universal misery of the classes that were formerly rich and affluent. This last report is equally concise, simple, and full of certain and well-known facts, of which all France was competent to judge. Can it then be supposed that if the Directory had it in their power, they would have hesitated to contradict these facts, on the faith of which the Council of Elders unanimously refused them the subsidies they were soliciting \*? In short, it must be evident to every

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\* These four reports are amply confirmed by that which the new committee of finances have lately presented on the 28th January 1799, by their chairman Malès, from which the following are some extracts:

"Behold the wretched state of our commercial connexions abroad. What do we witness at home, in these times of universal distrust

one, that those of the deputies who begin to deplore the impoverishment of France, state clear and nume-

and discredit? Manufactories in a state of stagnation or of ruin; deserted workshops; men formerly employed in active industry, and in clothing our armies, turned money-jobbers; others, whose mercantile genius rendered every other nation tributary to France, *begging* for the precarious subsistence of collecting the tolls at turnpikes, or becoming clerks in the public offices."

"Agriculture is overwhelmed with unfold provisions; but, *for want of ability in the consumers to pay for them, they perish in the hands of the farmer.* Should this state of affairs continue, the quantity reproduced, will necessarily be *less and less* every year; and thus, perhaps, we shall at length experience the horrors of a *famine.*"

"Our internal commerce is still more wretched; and beneath its steps, devouring usury and unexpected failures are yawning to destroy it."

This paper concluded by declaring, "that without the establishment of some new branch of revenue, we must expect to witness an excessive rise in the interest of money, increasing failures, and a constantly progressive *augmentation of the deficit, until it produces the very calamities the enemies of the republic are wishing for.*" To avoid these *catastrophes*, the chairman proposed a tax of a sou or a half-penny *per pound on salt.* Nor is it to be wondered at that this tax was rejected, when we observe one of his chief arguments for the expediency of new taxes on consumption is, that the articles on which they are laid *perish for want of consumers who are ABLE TO PAY FOR THEM.*

This report was but a few weeks posterior to that wherein the same committee of finances had asserted as a *certain fact*, that the deficit amounted only to forty-five millions. Scarcely, however, had they obtained the tax on windows and coach-gateways, which, according to them, ought almost entirely to have covered it, before they came forward to reveal, that, notwithstanding this subsidy, the deficit would amount, not to forty-five, but to fifty millions. Nor is this all: five days after this retraction, the Directory sent a message to the Councils, informing them, that their committee were also mistaken in computing the deficit of the year vii. at only fifty millions, for that it was 43,778,262 livres *for the first quarter*, and this exclusively of that on the receipts of the additional 125 millions appropriated to the extraordinaries of the army.

"Do not imagine," continues the message, "that our situation is improved at the beginning of the second quarter.—The receipts have seldom exceeded the average rate of *ten millions per decade; they have most frequently fallen short of that sum*; and such is now the situation of the national treasury on the 12th of this month (31st January 1799), that there remains only for the supply of this decade, 4,660,880 livres, 9s. 9d. *a sum which is NOT SUFFICIENT to ensure the pay of the armies.*—The subsistence of the troops is not certain;



rous facts, while the Directory and their agents, who, from time to time, exaggerate the prosperity and resources of the Great Nation, do not even attempt to contradict these facts; and never adduce any of a contrary tendency; unless we choose to consider as such the mere boastings of some of the speakers, who ascend the tribunes to declaim with exultation on *the fine climate of France, her fertile soil, favoured by the gods, and cultivated by thirty millions of freemen.*

How long shall we continue to behold the extraordinary phænomenon of a state, which, in the midst of such complete disorganization, still proceeds with the impulse originally given it by its assignats, and which, without having time to recover from its ruins, daily witnesses the fracture of the springs that give it motion, and which had hitherto remained entire? This is a problem, for the solution of which the experience of the past affords us no data; because it is hitherto without example, that a government involved in such expenses, can so long maintain itself

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the provisioning of the fleet is wholly neglected, or extremely incomplete; a great number of the servants of the public are in the greatest distress, and yet no relief can be given them. The most urgent disbursements are suspended; the national credit sinks instead of rising, that of individuals is involved in its consequences; the expenditure is increasing, and the service, which has already been compromised, is in danger of a *fatal and immediate catastrophe*. These are notorious facts which no contrary assertion can destroy.—By making you acquainted with them, the Directory are fulfilling a severe duty. *They DISCHARGE themselves in the presence of the republic of all RESPONSIBILITY for the disastrous consequences that would attend an interruption of the most urgent and most sacred branches of the service.*"

The Moniteur states, that a long and violent agitation took place after this message was read; which is the more probable, because, if the receipts are not sufficient to ensure the PAY of the army, the INDEMNITIES of the two Councils begin to be extremely precarious.

under the burden of so great a deficit. But the fall of this expiring monster is no less certain, and will be no less terrible, because it has been so long deferred.

I know that, among its numerous victims, are some who begin to believe its existence may be permanent, and that it can eternally endure these convulsions, merely because it has survived the destruction of its paper circulation during two whole years. Though it is natural, misfortune should render men impatient, yet those Frenchmen who reproach me with having fed them with fallacious hopes, and who seem to estimate the moving power or the duration of states, by the laws of animal vitality, will permit me to repeat what I have elsewhere observed, that *we must be very ignorant of historical facts, if we imagine the distress of the finances of so vast an empire can arrest its progress from day to day, as a house of trade is compelled to suspend all their enterprises from the moment when their first bill is protested\**.

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\* *Histoire de l'Administration des Finances de la République Française, pendant l'Année 1796, p. 229.*

This passage ought surely to have protected me from the reproach of having predicted the instantaneous fall of the usurpers on the very day when the assignat plate should be broken in their hands. The author of an ingenious work, entitled, *Antidote au Congrès de Rastadt*, has lately said, that "I was *right* to assign an early period for the fall of the paper circulation, but that I was *wrong* in concluding, that of the republic must follow it;" *for*, adds he, *it has not fallen, NOR IS IT PROBABLE IT SHOULD; since it has done more than merely to exist on paper, it has existed without it—IT HAS FOUND MEANS TO DO WITHOUT FINANCES.*

Although it be wholly unimportant to the public whether an individual has been more or less deceived in his conjectures, I may be allowed to remind the reader, that even in my first publication I insisted that the æra of this political death depended, above all things, on the allied powers persevering in the war, and on the magnitude of their

I leave it for the impartial reader to pronounce; whether the dissolution of this body politic has not proceeded with infinitely greater rapidity than could have been expected, when we take into the account the pillage of so many various countries, by means of which it has kept its ground during the last three years: I leave him also to decide whether it is with

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*sacrifices to prevent the republican armies from getting possession of the resources of such nations as they wished to conquer, in order thereby to conquer others.* But it is infinitely more interesting than any personal controversies, to study the future by contemplating the past. How is it possible the writer I have just quoted should advance that *the republic has done without finances?* Has he forgotten the 200 millions of *Batavian recriptions*, and the thirty millions in *specie*, which Bonaparte boasted, in the year 1796, of having sent from Italy to the treasury of Paris? Has he never heard of the forty-five millions which the agents of the treasury levied there in the following year? Does he pretend to deny the pecuniary contributions which the King of Naples, and several of the German princes, have paid to the Directory? Does he imagine no part of the plate of the churches which have been pillaged and plundered, wherever the republican armies have appeared, has been brought to Paris? Has he appreciated the produce of the second pillage of Rome, and the treasures seized at Berne and Zurich? Has he considered the contributions expended on the spot in Italy and Germany, and the requisitions in kind which have there maintained, during three years, above half the armies of France? If all these facts are notorious, it is not a fact, as he asserts, that the republic has *found means to do without finances.* All that is really true is, that, in default of finances of her own, she has found means, as I feared she would, to *seize the resources* of her adversaries, that she might employ them against themselves.

Should the nations they threaten with destruction, still continue thus to suffer themselves to be plundered; should Tuscany, Spain, and Portugal fall also into their hands; and when the Emperor is attacked, which he must be very soon, should the sovereigns of the North remain idle and indifferent spectators of his fall, as he was himself a supine and passive witness of the invasion of Piedmont and of Naples; in short, should France indemnify herself for the loss of the Bank of England, by seizing that of Berlin, which she beholds with equal avidity as the treasures of Medina and Mecca; then so long as these treasures shall last, will the author of *P. Antidote* be able to say this republic will *not necessarily fall*; but should it be reduced to its own resources, I persist in asserting that it

**WILL FALL BY THE EXHAUSTION OF ITS FINANCES.**

the finances of their neighbours, or their own, that the French have supplied the loss of the assignats, and hitherto survived the deficit that consumes them : I leave him to determine whether the misery of the plundering nation is not still greater, and, above all, more durable, than the impoverishment of the plundered countries : and I ask whether the *colossal fortune* which the conquerors expected to raise with the produce of their extensive and unprincipled rapacity, and which only overawes the ignorant, is not of the same nature with that by which the Roman consul recognised all the signs of the profoundest indigence : *Dives es, sin autem propter aviditatem pecuniæ, nullum quæstum turpem putas,—si quotidie fraudas, decipis, poscis, pacisceris, auferis, eripis ; si SOCIOS SPO-LIAS ærarium expilas ; si testamenta amicorum expectas, autne expectas quidem at ipse SUPPONIS : hæc utrum ABUNDANTIS an EGENTIS signa sunt ?*

## CHAPTER XI.

## CONCLUSION.

*The French Usurpers can no longer subsist but by means of War.*

PLUTARCH informs us that Pyrrhus was compelled to make incursions on his neighbours, because he was not rich enough to maintain his 6000 infantry and 600 horse at home. The same poverty which two thousand years ago induced that prince to undertake the conquest of Italy, has in our own times driven Bonaparte into the same country; and most assuredly, had the modern Italians, after their first defeats, displayed the least spark of that dauntless spirit by which the little Roman republic repaired every check they suffered, the modern Pyrrhus would long ago have cried out, like his predecessor, “ *Another victory, and I am undone;*” his soldiers would long ago have said to each other, like those of the greatest captain of antiquity, *Omnium victores, omnium inopes sumus, nec luxurid laboramus, sed bello instrumenta belli consumpsimus.*

Nor would it yet be too late to reduce them to that extremity, could all the nations whom the government of France threatens with destruction, be convinced that war is now necessary to its existence; that after having irretrievably deprived themselves of the resources of paper circulation; after having exhausted all the productive expedients which they de-

rived from the influence of terror at home, nothing now remains for the Directory but to spread that terror abroad; in short, that they can only obtain success by partial wars, which afford them time, and furnish the means of successively plundering every country where industry has produced those riches which they behold with envy and rapacity.

Yes, partial wars are the only mine that remains for them to explore: nor have they, without working it with redoubled vigour, hitherto supplied the emptiness of their treasury, and enabled two thirds of their armies to be paid and fed by Switzerland, Germany, Holland, and Egypt. If they go on seizing the resources of the weak to turn them against the powerful, the King of Sardinia's fate awaits all the Sovereigns of Europe. Even such of the latter as still believe themselves invulnerable, may vainly display in insulated heroism their uncooperative prodigies of valour; like the inhabitants of Schweitz and Underwald, they will no longer be able to struggle against the torrent they have suffered to increase, and their subjects will deplore, when it is too late, as did the most warlike of the Swiss, that they did not rush in a mass on the common enemy, the very moment when the latter passed the frontiers of the Helvetic league.

What would have been the fate of the English nation, had they participated in the torpor of the continental powers; had they also offered themselves as victims to these new Vandals, and had they not in due time made the necessary preparations to deprive them of all hopes of pillaging their bank, or of maintaining fleets and armies at their expense? For,

tunately, however, the whole nation felt that no other means of saving their property existed, than to sacrifice a great part of their incomes, and that it was necessary to take up arms in defence of their country, of their liberty, of the throne, and of the altar. It is by means of this twofold national effort, that the King of Great Britain, after having called forth near 300,000 soldiers, and 100,000 sailors, in their own defence, has found means to blockade the enemy in their ports, and spread an universal consternation over those very coasts from which the French had promised to invade his dominions.

When, on the 30th December 1797, Jean de Bry, without concealing the dangers of this maritime expedition, confessed that *it was sufficiently justified by the necessity of the measure* \*, he let slip, in few words, that truth, which I have been endeavouring in the course of this work to prove: I mean that the oppressors of France could no longer exist at home but by sending their slaves to foreign pillage, and that they are henceforward compelled to calculate not so much the probable dangers, as the possible produce, of these military excursions. Thanks to the public spirit which the English nation have displayed; they have convinced the Directory that they can neither be disunited nor intimidated. Hence it became necessary

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\* Should any one still doubt that the expedition against England and Ireland originated in the poverty of the finances, it would be sufficient to refer them to the intercepted correspondence of Citizen Stone, one of those Englishmen who have emigrated to Paris, in pursuit of liberty, and who piques himself on being in the confidence of the Directory. *The invasion of England*, he writes to his friend Dr. Priestley, is a *dénrée* or merchandise of the first necessity for them.

to compute the perils of a maritime expedition, and consequently to renounce the idea of braving them. And what has been the consequence? Precisely what I stated a year ago, when, quoting the visionary boasts of this very Jean de Bry, I said, " that if the French fleet, blocked up in their own ports, were compelled to renounce the projected invasion, the Directory would *indemnify themselves* for the loss of this *prey*, by devoting the neutral powers to the fate with which they had threatened England."

This alternative was inevitable, nor is it any longer doubtful, since the fleet originally destined to pillage the bank of England, went to Egypt to seize the treasures of Medina and of Mecca. To indemnify themselves for the British islands having become invulnerable, the Directory have attacked the five neutral and unarmed powers; they have sacked the little Swiss cantons, pillaged Rome, seized Piedmont, and made themselves masters of Malta and Egypt. All these enterprises have been executed within the space of a few months, and yet nations there are, who still continue so blind as not to perceive that their turn is speedily approaching; that since the fall of the paper circulation, the French Directory can no longer support the armies of the republic, but by sending them into the territories of their neighbours, no matter whether allies or enemies; and that there now exists in the heart of the continent the same military confraternity that the Algerines and Tunifians have established on the coasts of Africa! In vain may its founders exult in *the majestic rank assumed by*



*the Great Nation* \*. This Great Nation is now no more than a horde of buccaneers, under the command of a government of arch-pirates ; who, like the Dey of Algiers, maintain themselves by the plunder of the weaker states, and the base and unmanly jealousies of the powerful.

Such is now the effrontery of the governors of France, that they are no longer at the pains of concealing, that plunder is their last resource, and the only means of *meliorating* their finances : “ Our arms become enervated, our *finances are exhausted*,” said Brissot on the 19th September, “ by a too long continued uncertainty.—Peace to cottages, and war to tyrants.—We will carry it into the heart of their dominions. *They alone shall bear the burden, but the finances of the republic will be in the road to melioration*, while our armies will emancipate the nations. I will *freely* confess, that when I contemplate our past achievements, when I reflect on the high destiny that awaits us, and behold innumerable nations soliciting our aid, I thank the blindness of our enemies, and I am led to wish their ministers may fill up the measure of their crimes.—We want but *two campaigns* more, or, which is the same thing, a few *royal crimes* and a few *brokes of the republican sabre*.”

This is not the only deputy who has *freely* confessed, that war alone can henceforward *meliorate* their finances. *It is by conquering our enemies*, said his colleague Duvignet a few days after, *that we shall*

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\* François de Neufchâteau.

*gain new prizes; and acquire new instruments of victory.* This is speaking plainly; and the invasion of Switzerland, of Egypt, of Lucca, and of Piedmont, further explain, that the senate of France understand by the word *enemies* the inhabitants of every country into which their legions can penetrate.

But let us not forget, that in proportion to the facility they have experienced of completing the levy of 200,000 men by conscription, is their failure in that of the 125 millions of livres, which they represented as indispensably necessary for their equipment and their pay. One of the most enlightened of the members, however, incessantly repeated, that unless this subsidy succeeded, the conscription might rather be prejudicial than useful. “Attend to the contributions, attend to the finances.—Attend day and night to this important work,” said Stevenotte on the 21st August 1798: “let the scheme for recruiting the armies be supported by a financial law equally founded on justice and equality. Then will you put an end to the criminal irresolutions of Rastadt. Then, *and then only*, will you have *vansquished* all the kings of Europe.”—“’Tis in vain, added Duvignet, “that new warriors take up arms in the cause of the republic, if our financial resources do not *go hand in hand* with the new display of our military force:” a truth which Villers rendered still more striking, in the sitting of the 31st December, by insisting, that “the situation of the republic is *such*, that the *POLITICAL result of it depends entirely on its PECUNIARY resources.*”

Mancipiis locuples eget æris Capadocum rex. HOR.

This sufficiently proves, that the policy of the regency of France is now precisely that of the regency of Algiers and Tunis; and the resemblance is the more perfect, since, by having, like them, rendered their slaves insensible to the useful arts, and robbed them of the habits of productive industry, the Directory have by degrees reduced them to that state of impoverishment, which is represented to be the present condition of the inhabitants of the Barbary coast, to whom war is desirable, because it is the only lucrative species of employment. In the second chapter I foretold, that the misery of the French would drive them into the armies, and that they would *submit with the most supple obedience* to the decree of conscription. This prediction is already amply fulfilled; for the official reports state, that the success of this new levy has even exceeded the hopes of the two Councils. *The roads are covered with soldiers*, said Bonnet on the 2d December; *France seems, a second time, to have risen in a mass.*—"Two words," added Mourer, "will convey a just definition of this *grand, this salutary measure*, and point out the *immense effects* of adopting and putting it in force. IT IS BY THIS THAT THE REPUBLIC WILL ALWAYS BE IN THE ARMY, AND THE ARMY IN THE REPUBLIC."

Can we require any further proof that it is intended to enlist every year all those who shall have come to the age of twenty-one, and that the *immense effects* of this measure are merely to continue the war as long as there shall remain a single nation to plunder?

Mourer had more reasons than one for calling this

a *salutary measure*; for it is only by *forcing* the youthful citizens to become soldiers that the republic can assemble them beneath its banners. This even its partisans no longer deny; for in the sitting of the 18th October, when one of them solicited some exceptions in favour of certain classes of the conscription, his colleague Vezin silenced him by observing, that *the resistance of the youth is only at their homes, and that from the moment they set out to join the army, they think of nothing but the republic.*

He could scarcely have acknowledged with more simplicity, that the only means of making them think of the republic is to force them to *quit* it; that no sooner are they absent from it, than they begin to believe in its existence; and that scarcely are they converted into warriors, before their hatred is converted into love.

Even when this metamorphosis is accomplished, there still remain two other obstacles to overcome; that of constantly chaining victory to their car, and that of insuring the pay of the vanquishers, should their plunder become insufficient to provide for it. Creuzé-Latouche has very clearly stated this last difficulty: "In vain will you have *fixed* victory on your side. *Without finances* your efforts are *fruitless*. If the republic is *proclaimed* by speeches and oaths, it must be *established* by *works*. In respect to their finances, republics are not *invulnerable*; and the same cause will inevitably bring on the same fate\*." Jacqueminot supported him, by apprizing his colleagues,

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\* See the debates of the 2d February 1799.

that TO REFUSE *the government the necessary supplies, is to compel them to bend their laurel-crowned brow before the kings they have vanquished.* But no one has more candidly displayed the dreadful consequences of these *refusals*, whenever the armies receive a check, than the Directorial gazette itself. *If, however, it is there said, they should not prove the strongest, if they should be driven back, what would then become of them?*

What would become of them after a whole campaign of misfortunes? This it is easy to foresee. No longer able to subsist at the enemy's expense, they would separate themselves from their leaders, who would be unable to pay them; and we should soon behold those youthful recruits, after having been taught to spill their blood in the field of battle, come back to accuse the Directory of their privations, call them to an account for their compulsory retreat, and punish them for their misfortunes. And as such an event would infallibly become a signal of general insurrection to the Low Countries, and to Switzerland, Italy, and Holland; the deliverance of Europe and of the French nation themselves would then be no longer doubtful\*.

But how can we expect to behold so great a deliverance, while the princes of the North, whose as-

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\* The original of this work was published in London in the beginning of March, previous to the renewal of hostilities between Austria and France. But scarcely have they broken out, before the French begin to complain of partial insurrections at Rome, at Naples, and in Piedmont; and General Massena has published a proclamation to the Swiss, beginning with these words, *Inhabitants of Switzerland, why this sudden change?* T.

stance is so important, continue supine and passive spectators of the conquest of the South ? If they leave the Directory time to complete its spoliation, and to discipline by *actual service* the 200,000 recruits whom they are incorporating among their veterans, these are the ambassadors for whom the missions of Vienna, of Warsaw, and of Berlin, are destined.

Perhaps they will order them to march towards Madrid before they attempt a passage over the Danube ; but still the respite cannot be very long. Were this plan executed as soon as the republican armies had circumscribed the King of Spain within his American possessions, they would be the better able to cope with the whole of Germany. It is with the plate of the churches of Toledo that they would make themselves masters of the mines of Kremnitz and of the Harz.

Should any one flatter himself, that the spoliation of Spain and Portugal would satisfy the Directory, he would fall into the grossest of mistakes ; for it may be held as certain, that they will ruin all the nations over whom they extend their rapacious hands, without enriching themselves ; and that they have displayed, if possible, still more folly than avidity in the new laws of war on which they act towards them. They are so uncertain of the duration of their conquests, and so eager to lay their hands on every thing, that they grasp at the capital stock in lieu of taking the income, and thus instantaneously exhaust the sources of the latter, as well as those of taxation, without even being so successful as to obtain the former. This will be no paradox, if we consider, that where-

ever their generals and commissaries appear, their first care, after having cleared the churches, is to sequester the estates of the prince, the clergy, and the nobility : but the fear of confiscation going before them in every conquered or threatened province, the fortune of the land-owners is diminished by at least three fourths, even before their property is actually violated. Thus it is that the Directory have found the art of realizing the fable of the goose that laid golden eggs \* ; and this also will show, that the more

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\* Of all the conquered countries Holland has, without comparison, yielded to the treasury of Paris the greatest pecuniary aid ; and Lecouteulx has lately expressed his surprise, that the Dutch could do this without being completely ruined : " In point of riches," said he, " the Batavian republic has suffered much more considerable losses than ourselves ; since her revolution has cost her almost all her colonies, while those she retains are of no value to her. She has also lost all her trade, which was almost her only source of wealth. Yet this has not prevented the inhabitants of that little country, on the one hand, from paying with the greatest exactness, and on the very day when they fell due, the major part of the Batavian subscriptions subscribed for the French republic, the whole of which amounts to more than 200 millions of livres ; and, on the other hand, from maintaining a considerable body of our troops, although they had not, like us, *national domains* to supply (at least in part) their extraordinary expenses. The common rate of interest, however, in Holland, is only six *per cent. per annum*, while here it is very commonly two *per cent. per month* ; and still higher when money is borrowed on land or houses, on which it is very often impossible to borrow at all."

This passage is, as it were, a complete treatise on political economy ; and is the more instructive, as Lecouteulx, while inquiring into the origin of so striking a difference, pointed out the principal causes of it himself, though without intending it. It was precisely because the revolutionary government of Holland had no *national domains* ; it was because they did not employ confiscation, that the Batavian land-owners have been able to preserve their credit, and therefore to borrow at moderate interest on their estates, which only lost a small part of their value. Two other circumstances also explain how it was that the Dutch, without being completely ruined, have been enabled to discharge this enormous tribute of 200 millions. The first of these is, that being payable by instalments, extending to several years, they were enabled to pay them out of their

they indulge in plunder, the more necessary will plunder become to their existence.

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incomes, and almost without touching their capitals. Secondly, that France, in lieu of sending thither her extortioners, left to the Batavian government the exclusive care of assessing and levying this sum; and that the Dutch have wisely persevered in the old financial system, without venturing, like their instructors, on new experiments.

I believe the Dutch were obliged to Pichegru for this arrangement, which has preserved them from total ruin, and by means of which the treasury of Paris has drawn from this conquest greater pecuniary aid than from all her other conquests together.

Yet even this striking example has not opened their eyes; and the first step of the commissaries, when they made themselves masters of Piedmont, was to reduce the *billets de crédit* (the royal paper circulation) to one third of their nominal value, although they put up to sale the estates of the prince and clergy, two operations which, coming together, would be sufficient to frustrate the hopes of the confiscators. Thus, although that province was as rich as Saxony itself, I venture boldly to challenge them, even should they administer it according to the system of the French financiers, to extort from it half the revenue derived by Frederick II. from that electorate, by means of which he struggled, during seven years, against a coalition still more formidable than that which now opposes France. If he succeeded in annually raising in Saxony the enormous sum of fifty millions of livres, this arose from his never venturing to make any expropriations whatever; for he even abstained from touching the domains of the prince. Yet he used his right of conquest with rigour, for he increased the taxes to the utmost; but he never departed from the principle of doing nothing that could put a stop to reproduction; nothing that could suspend commercial speculations; nothing that could disorganize the established system of finance; nothing that could interrupt the course of law, expose the poor to be out of work, or deter the rich from bringing their fortunes into circulation. His unparalleled economy, and his indefatigable superintendence, co-operated with these principles; and he himself confessed, that his enemies were vanquished merely because they were exhausted long before him.

Let us now compare with this mode of conduct that of the French conquerors of the present day. Wherever they appear, their first step is to seize and sell lands; and as no man of property dares to appear at these sales, lest he should betray his own fortune, the price received scarcely ever amounts to as much as the lawful owners could have advanced under the form of taxes. For this the French endeavour to indemnify themselves by falling on the farmer, of whom they demand contributions impossible to be paid; in consequence of which, he abandons the pursuit of agriculture. This



So true is this assertion, that only a few weeks after they had made themselves masters of Piedmont and the treasure at Lucca, they sent that celebrated message to the Councils, wherein they declare, that the *receipts* for the first decade in February were *insufficient for the pay of the troops*. Yet in lieu of being deterred by this discovery from undertaking new enterprises, we shall find, by comparing dates, that on the very day when they perceived that the battalions had their *full complements*, and that they could not find money for their *pay*, they ordered the Court of Vienna instantly to send back the Russians, under pain of renewing hostilities within a *fortnight*. So fully are they convinced that they can no longer exist but by means of war, and that to them it is become an *article of first necessity*.

Were the exhausted state of their finances the only motive that urged them to adopt this line of conduct, the powers of the North might perhaps enter into a composition with them, by consenting to become their tributaries; but even were these powers to subscribe a sufficient sum to cover the expenses of a peace establishment, the hatred of the French for kings would,

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consequence so rapidly ensues, that, to prevent Romagna from being reduced to absolute sterility, the French general has already been obliged to portion out the deserted farms among the Polish soldiers in his army.

Such too is the fate that awaits Piedmont and every other country that shall fall under the destructive power of these insatiable devouring vultures. Their rapacity, their presumption, and their folly, not only depreciate, degrade, and destroy whatever they touch, but whatever they approach, till in a few months they find themselves the mere nominal masters of an exhausted country. Much has been said of taxes taken in kind, and the sums levied upon Italy: these levies are nothing, or next to nothing, when compared with the losses suffered by the land-owners in consequence of the depreciation of their estates.

nevertheless, place the latter in a state of perpetual war with France. Never, never will the Directory imagine their usurpation secure and permanent, till they have banished from the earth every government that can remind that enslaved country, that they once prospered beneath a monarchical form of government; or till Europe shall no longer exhibit a contrast that will convince them they are the most miserable of nations. It is particularly under this last point of view that England has become the chief object of the most inveterate hatred of the regicides; a hatred which they are so incapable of concealing, that they daily proclaim at their tribune, that the republic will never be consolidated and established till they have removed the last vestiges of the last of thrones. Let us attend to the language they themselves use: "We will call the nations to the recovery of their liberties, and every step we take ~~shall be marked~~ with the creation of some popular authority \*.—'Tis not with speeches, but with *bayonets*, that kings must be chastised †.—To them republican war is the electrical conductor of revolutions. They perceive not that the earth is crumbling beneath their steps, and that it is on the point of opening to become their tomb; that the republic has *restored* them their *dominions* and their sceptres; and that it is her powerful hand that deigns to protect them against the indignation of their subjects ‡.—Paris is become the lever that moves all Europe at pleasure §.—At pleasure the Great Nation sends conquest or deliverance to fo-

\* Briot.

† Talot.

‡ Briot.

§ Lecointe.

reign nations \*.—We are ready—What monarch is tired of his reign †?—We will not lay down our arms but upon the *ruins of thrones*. We will destroy them by the germs and the *leaven* of the French revolution †."

This is a sample of the manifestoes with which the bulletin of the two Councils is frequently filled; and from what they venture so publicly to declare, it is easy to infer what passes in their private juntoes.

Nor let it be pretended, that these are mere oratorical flowers and figures of speech. Scarcely had this threatening language been uttered before it was put in force against the King of Sardinia, although the revolutionists of France had just united with him in the bonds of an *offensive and defensive alliance*. This very treaty was even the title under which they declared him to have forfeited his crown §; and

\* Chenier. † Address of the legislative body to the French nation of the 29th September 1798. ‡ Lacuée.

§ The following is the proclamation of General Joubert when he made himself master of Piedmont; "At length the Court of Turin have filled up the measure of their iniquity, and taken off the mask. *They have asked for delays to furnish their contingent*. The French government, which is the friend of peace, expected to have reclaimed them by conciliatory measures. Their *declared* wish was to heal all the wounds of this long war, and to restore tranquillity to Piedmont, by daily drawing the bonds of their alliance closer. But their hopes have been basely betrayed, and they now order their general to *revenge the honour* of the Great Nation, and no longer believing a court that proves faithless to their treaties, to secure to Piedmont the enjoyments of peace and of happiness."

This order to *revenge the honour* of the Great Nation was not sent to the republican generals till they had succeeded in procuring the citadel to be yielded to them, under an engagement to *maintain the public tranquillity of Piedmont, and prevent any aid or protection being given, either directly or indirectly, to those who were desirous of giving disturbance to the government*.

The first step of the French garrison, when they entered this

at the very time when this new plot was preparing at Turin, those who afterwards exulted most in its success were exclaiming at the tribune of Paris—"Ask Naples, *Turin*, Madrid, and Berlin, whether we are not *religiously faithful* allies, and whether we do not

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fortress, was to set up the tree of liberty, and receive with open arms whoever was disposed to give *disturbance* to the government; who having ventured to make some complaints of this flagrant violation of the treaty, General Brune replied as follows: *His Sardinian Majesty will remember, that he has COMMISSIONED us to secure the tranquillity of his dominions.* The better to discharge this *commission*, he demanded the liberation of all the state criminals, provisions for the citadel for two months, the disbanding of the militia, and the removal of the governor of Alexandria. *On these conditions*, he added, *the republic may still believe in the FIDELITY of her ALLY, and banish her suspicions, notwithstanding the fatal errors that have taken place.*

His Sardinian Majesty having complied with all that was exacted of him, the Directory, in order to lull him to rest on the edge of the precipice, recalled General Brune, as if he had exceeded his powers, and substituted Joubert in his place, whom they ordered to complete this scene of perfidy by striking a great blow. To that general I leave the task of giving an account of this glorious exploit, which he had scarcely performed before he thanked his companions in arms in *the order of the day of the army* as follows: "By means of this *rapid and bold expedition*, terminated by three days of *forced marches* of more than thirty miles, the army have become *masters of all Piedmont*. Both our rear and our communication with the allied republics are secured: an army of auxiliaries, one of the finest arsenals in Europe, 1800 pieces of cannon at Turin alone, 100,000 muskets, ammunition, and provisions of every kind, are henceforth at our disposal. The troops have done their duty, and shown their *impatience* to give proof of their bravery."

Affuredly this *impatience* was very much misplaced, for the King of Sardinia so little expected these *forced marches*, that he had not even given his troops any eventual and provisionary order in case of resistance, and subscribed without hesitation the order of his allies to resign his sceptre and evacuate his capital on the very night of their arrival. Such is the *rapid and bold expedition* of which the Directory boasted as of a trophy, in a manifesto, wherein it was stated, among other grievances of which they complained against this *perjured king*, that the *dress of the French had been turned into ridicule in his dominions*. It was on the reading of this manifesto that Lemer cier exclaimed, "I consider the event which has just been communicated to us as one of the most fortunate of the revolution. It will teach the kings who are faithful to their treaties, that the French republic will ever respect hers with all governments whatever."

respect the faith of treaties, even at the sacrifice of our interests and of our glory.”

This appeal to the testimony of the King of Sardinia was on the 17th September, and the Deputy Briot had the effrontery to urge it at the very period when the French were compelling that unfortunate prince to admit them into the fortress of Turin, of which they were scarcely in possession, before they ordered him to descend from his throne, and to declare his army an *integral part* of that of the French. No sooner had he signed his abdication, than the Directory eagerly announced it at Berlin and Madrid, directly reproaching Charles Emanuel with *cowardice* and *imbecility*; and completing this individual insult with a general assurance, that the treaties between the republic and other monarchies *have never been more faithfully observed in time past, nor ever will be in times to come.*

Such, however, is the condescension of some cabinets, that they send ambassadors to the republic, who daily hear it declared, that their masters *only exist, because it is not the will of the Directory to make them disappear; that the French are able to obtain by force what they vainly attempt by persuasion* \*; and that *PEACE ought to be the wisest and deepest policy of the kings.*

Deplorable infatuation! The representatives of kings hear this language. What do I say? They even place their trust in it without taking any notice of what daily passes before their eyes, nor of the innumerable official papers in which the French go-

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\* Message of the Directory of the 23d September 1798.

vernment proclaim aloud to the sound of the trumpet, that war is become that government's *wisest and deepest policy*, and that this alone can protract its ruin.

Oh ! that I could emblazon this great truth in letters of fire in the cabinet of all those sovereigns who seem to wait till the universal conflagration of Europe shall rouse them from their lethargic torpor ! I will, at least, endeavour to lay before them the records of this senate of incendiaries, who involve them all, without distinction, in their anathemas. These records themselves will teach them, that there remains no alternative, but that either their thrones must fall, or this republic be destroyed.

Already may they read the doom it is preparing for them in the transports excited in the two Councils by the fate of the King of Naples. Lauffat himself, who was not one of the regicides, and who passes for one of the most circumspect of the deputies, could not contain his joy at beholding another crowned head among the victims of the Great Nation. " Let us send," he exclaimed, " since they desire it, another miserable king of *Syracuse*, as has once already been witnessed by antiquity, to serve them as an *example* at Corinth."

This excess of joy was the more natural, as it was of superior and primary importance to them to make a great *example* of the only king who had dared to harbour an idea of resistance, and to go forth to meet and brave the danger. His precipitation, indeed, has been blamed ; but was there not reason for him to

conclude, that if at this critical moment he was abandoned by his natural ally, he could not trust to him in any case whatever; that if he sank, he only accelerated his fall by a few weeks at the utmost; and that if, on the contrary, he induced the House of Austria to pursue his steps, and imitate his example, he had the best chance of saving himself, and of becoming the deliverer of Italy, by sounding the alarm of returning vigour throughout Europe? Assuredly this noble resolution of Ferdinand IV. but too fully justifies the ecstasies in which the two Councils indulged, on learning that the inactivity of the Austrians rendered his fall certain. But how shall we describe the cowardice with which they insulted Charles Emanuel, after having exiled and deposed him as a refractory king? "Let him wander, like the infamous Lewis XVIII." said Chabert, "from court to court, leading a life of shame and humiliation, and let him serve as an example to those who choose to imitate him."—"He thought himself sufficiently strong," said another member, "to carry on with impunity a covered war of policy and hypocrisy, still more bloody than that which necessity obliges us to wage against our enemies. Such is the doom reserved for every perjured king. *Such will be the reward of those who dare to violate treaties.* We supported his tottering throne against the tempest he was raising in his dominions.—Let this fugitive king now cast his eyes around, and what remains? A *fallen crown*, a dreadful solitude, that terror which pursues all tyrants, and a *torment* more cruel still," &c.

Echaffériaux was right in speaking of a *torment* still more cruel than the loss of his *fallen crown*; it was that of having once relied on the words of peace of these traitors; that of having thrown open to them his last fortress, in lieu of entering it himself to fall as a king should fall; it was that of having abandoned his subjects to the terrific scourge of French domination. Alas! on them we should indeed bestow our pity!

But let us profit by the inconsideration of the regicides, and let us continue our view of the menaces in which they indulged against all sovereigns when pronouncing the dethronisation of those of Naples and Sardinia:—"No longer could they say they reigned *by the grace of God*, but *by the grace of the French republic* \*.—Already has the King of Sardinia disappeared from Piedmont.—Our troops were there; they joined the fire of their cannon to the torch of reason, and the republic was victorious. These kings, who were ignorant that royalty exists but by the grace or will of the people, ought to have been convinced of this truth by the *execution* of the last King of France †. Among the crowned heads are *several* who will soon be mere *twelfth-cake kings* ‡.—By those who have taken off the mask, we may learn to know those, who, though they have not declared themselves, do not hate us with less acrimony ||.—Ye *populicidal* tyrants! at this fatal moment, you ought to feel your thrones tottering beneath you.—Despotism is contrary to na-

\* Michiels.

† Guyomard.

‡ Indet.

|| Bigonnet.



ture. Liberty will *devour* all tyrants, even those who were ignorant of her power \*."

I know not whether the Abbé Sieyès annexed a copy of these harangues to the official paper, in which he dared to notify to the Court of Prussia, the exile of the King of Sardinia; but after such a trait of effrontery, the Directory may justly boast of having kept their word with the two Councils, *that they would do every thing to remove the film, and OPEN the eyes of the powers of Europe* †.

No doubt the same notification was addressed to the congress of Rastadt, where the German princes are incessantly adding to their concessions, repeating after each, that they have *now exhausted all the sacrifices that are compatible with the political existence and future security of the empire*; as if any *sacrifices* could be *compatible* with the *future security* of the Germans, until they have radically *exhausted* every exertion of their remaining strength to recover their dominions; or as if the Directory did not insist on the cession of the whole left bank of the Rhine, merely that the French government may be in a better condition to make new incursions on the right bank, and *to send forth at pleasure either conquest or deliverance*.

And what was the reply of Jean de Bry to these German princes, 'who were once so proud? That regicide reproached them with *making no account of public calamities*. He exhorted them *not to shut their eyes to their own future condition*. He insisted on their delivering up all the strong posts which form the keys of Ger-

\* Bordas.

† Message of the 23d September 1798.

many. What do I say? He caused these very places to be blockaded or taken by assault in the midst of an armistice, and coolly invited those from whom he wrested them to *repose* BENEATH THE SHADOW of the Great Nation!

Let the King of Sardinia tell them what this *shadow* is: for he can tell them, better even than Switzerland itself, the just chastisement that awaits every sovereign who delivers up his barriers to the French, relies upon their worse than Punic faith, or prefers the disgraceful perils of their alliance, to the duty of burying himself beneath the ruins of his throne for the safety of his subjects.

What a dreadful contrast! The invasion of Switzerland has opened the eyes of the American nation; and yet the princes of Swabia and of Franconia flatter themselves they shall escape the fate of the Bernese government by daily putting up, like them, with new outrages; and, like them, robbing their subjects of that confidence in their own strength, that national energy of character, with which a nation is every thing, and without which it is nothing! What! shall these princes reproach the French nation with not throwing off their unmanly apathy, while they are themselves trembling with increasing fear and terror at every threatening note they receive from Paris, without considering that the spoliation of Germany is as much the offspring of *fear*, as that of the nobility of France?

How long shall terror, credulity, and mutual jealousies continue to afford inexhaustible resources to the ravagers of the continent? How long shall the

**German nation be forced by their princes to restrain their military ardour, and continue inactive spectators of their own degradation ?**

**Do these princes flatter themselves that, by means of submissions and of sacrifices, they will deprive the Directory of every pretext for war ? Can pretexts for war ever be wanting ? Behold the fate of their two most faithful allies, Switzerland and the Porte. Have they not annihilated the magistracy of Bern, because that body did not suffer the people to participate in the *sovereignty*, and because they held the reins of government with too firm a hand ? Have they not invaded Egypt, alleging that the representative of the Grand Signior left the reins of government at the disposal of the Beys ; that they had dared to despoil the prince of the universal right of property he enjoyed over all the lands, and that his SOVEREIGNTY itself was no more than an EMPTY name \* ?**

Even were there not that invincible incompatibility between every existing government, and that of France, which establishes a mortal contest between them, the poverty of the latter would impose on the Directory the necessity of renewing and perpetuating the war. But I must still recur to the impoverishment of their finances, because in that every thing finally centres and depends. In short, if it be proved that in time of peace an annual revenue of 500 millions is indispensably necessary to their existence, and that it is out of their power to levy any thing like that sum upon their subjects, it is evident their gene-

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\* Message of the Directory of the 14th September 1798.

rals must henceforward be their financiers, and that it is for them to wrest from foreign nations that pay which they can no longer expect to receive from France. Such is the dreadful result of the deficit : nor should I have bestowed so much labour and assiduity on collecting the documents that prove its existence and ascertain its amount, did it not thence appear that the French Directory are irremediably condemned either to fall for want of a sufficient public revenue, or to fill up the deficiency of the taxes at home by the contributions they can levy abroad. In this lies the whole question. Can they continue their usurpations without having numerous armies at their command ? and can they pay their armies with the revenues of their subjects ? If this is impossible, they must necessarily continue the war, not only from the same motives that rendered war the trade and element of the Romans, but from a motive a thousand times more irresistible, the law of *self-preservation*.

Montesquieu, when laying it down as a fact, that Rome *must necessarily have perished unless she overcame all the other nations*, very clearly explains the phenomenon to which she was indebted for the success of that great enterprise. “ The nations,” says he, “ who were threatened by them, were successively attacked, without either knowing or investigating the real cause of their misfortune, or attempting to remove it. Each of them thought themselves happy to obtain a truce, and considered it as a great advantage to have deferred the period of their ruin. Those who were at the greatest distance from the danger would not

approach it—They expected to derive from patient and abject submission some delay to the calamities that awaited them—Half the money that was sent to the Romans as the price of peace, would have sufficed to have destroyed them.”

In this passage we seem to be reading the history of the present war from the time of the defection of Prussia and Spain, from the time when the French government began to disarm the strongest of the coalesced powers, and make them believe in their moderation, while they were falling upon the weakest. We cannot, however, too strongly enforce, that there is this immense difference between the present war and that of the Romans, that the latter, by a wise administration of the public money, had, within themselves, resources against a succession of misfortunes; whereas the French can only prolong their existence by an uninterrupted series of victories and of plunder. Should they ever be reduced to continue the contest with their own internal resources, Europe is saved. But it will be irrecoverably lost, should the northern powers not speedily perceive that the poverty of the Directory will compel them, sooner or later, to attack them all; or should they not unite without delay, to drive back the republican legions within the ancient territories of France.

I appeal for the last time to the German nation; to that nation so long distinguished for the rectitude of their judgments. Is there one among them who can contemplate the overthrow of Switzerland and Italy, without reading in the plainest characters, the fate that is reserved for the Empire, should that

nation hesitate to oppose this new Roman power with those very arms, and those very resources, which will otherwise soon be wrested from their hands, to turn them against itself?

With what singular success have the Directory been hitherto making traffic of their terror! Already is the army of the coasts, once decorated with the pompous title of the *army of England*, advancing against Germany, to punish the princes of the congress of Rastadt for having employed remonstrances, when they ought, like the King of Great Britain, to have been raising subsidies and levying soldiers. What! the cohorts of France are again marching towards the Danube, and yet the northern powers still believe themselves secure behind the Weser or the Elbe! though they have excellent troops, to the amount of 4 or 500,000 men, under arms, who are burning to efface the stain which has been brought upon the German name, while the princes who ought to lead them on to meet the danger, still flatter themselves it will not reach them! Should they continue thus to be indifferent spectators of the progress of this revolutionary soldiery, whose leader has not scrupled to declare, that *the last hour of the kings was about to strike*\*; should they still suffer them with impunity to over-run the Empire, and plunder it a second time; the fatal sacrifice to which they will devote both themselves and their subjects, will be too fully accomplished.

No truth can be more clearly demonstrated, than

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\* Address of General Joubert to his army, in August 1798.

that Europe can only be saved by a general confederation of princes, sufficiently enlightened to perceive the dangers that attend on half-measures, or the least attempt at temporization; sufficiently just not to indemnify themselves at the expense of their weaker allies; sufficiently patriotic to desire no other compensation than that of escaping shipwreck; and, above all, sufficiently powerful, at once to pursue such means of defence and of attack as will arrest the still further overflow of the new barbarians.

Such are the only means of destroying the hydra: a noble enterprise, which would be equally easy and glorious, should the monarch who now sits on the throne of the great Frederic aspire, like him, to become the ægis of the German empire; or should he, pursuing the steps of Gustavus Adolphus, restore to the Protestant nations their ancient energy, and rally them around his standard to lead them against the common enemy. But as long as the sovereigns of the North shall continue inactive and panic-struck spectators of a struggle, which is unexampled, except in the history of Rome; as long as the most powerful among the German princes shall continue deaf to the cries of the weakest of the confederates; as long as they shall suffer them to be devoured one by one; like the companions of Ulysses, the regicide government are sure of their prey; and in this point of view at least may be allowed to exclaim with triumph,

THE RESOURCES OF THE REPUBLIC ARE ENTIRE!

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## SUPPLEMENT.

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*On the Revenue, the Deficit, and the Resources of the French Republic, on the 1st of June 1799.*

IN the short interval which has elapsed since the publication of the original of the foregoing work, the Directory have renewed the war; and in less than six weeks, their armies have been compelled to repass the Rhine, and retreat as far as the foot of the Alps. The Archduke Charles, General Kray, and Marshal Suwarrow, are but at the beginning of their career; yet all Bonaparte's brilliant exploits are already blotted out, and scarcely do any traces of his conquests remain for the revolutionists of France, but the heart-rending reflection of the sacrifices and crimes they have cost.

In the midst of these great events, which seem to ensure a speedy emancipation to the social world, it may perhaps appear rather out of place, to turn away our eyes, and contemplate the picture of distress exhibited by the finances of France. But however disgusting a subject of reflection these finances may, in general, form; yet if ever there was a period when they deserved a more particular investigation, surely



it must be when the greater part of those rich provinces, at whose expense the Directory have, during three years, maintained half their armies, have recently been rescued from their oppression: surely such an event must constitute a *new æra* in the finances of France, since she is at length reduced to the necessity not only of maintaining her armies at her own expense, but also of considerably increasing the number of her troops; and this at a time when the receipts for the last quarter have proved two fifths less productive than that of the preceding.

This last fact it is extremely important to establish; but the more fully to illustrate it, we must recur to the statement of the produce of the taxes given in pages 271 and 272, whence it appears that in the last year, the total of the receipts, whether ordinary or extraordinary, whether *national* or *departmental*, only amounted to about 325 millions of livres. It is very remarkable, that in the budget for that year, the expenses of the army alone, not even including those of the navy, were estimated at 341,054,000 livres. How then would it have been possible for the French government to go on, had they not been suffered to maintain above half their troops, at the expense of Holland, Switzerland, Italy, and the two banks of the Rhine?

Let us now compare the receipts for the year vi, with those upon which the Directory reckoned for the current year, and which, without including either the arrears, or the expenses of collection, were expected to produce 825 millions; 600 of which were appropriated to the *national* expenditure; 100 to

those called *departmental* and *local*; and 125 voted subsequently for the extraordinary expenses of the *conscription*\*.

However enormous this sum may appear, we must not for a moment suffer it to escape us, that it would be totally inadequate to the general expenses. This will be sufficiently demonstrated, if we recollect that the two Councils have thought proper to augment their indemnities by *one third*; and that by a voluntary mistake but recently discovered, the expenses of criminal justice were, in the budget of the present year, estimated only at 5,300,000 livres, although they amounted to 10 millions the year preceding.

But what shall we say of the additional subsidy of 125 millions, voted last October, and of which, if we may believe the Directory, 90 were sufficient for the equipment, the maintenance, and the pay of the two hundred thousand conscripts? Such an army, when under arms, would, under the old government, have cost nearly thrice that sum; yet the new government boast of having considerably augmented the pay of the troops.

They have been guilty of a still more flagrant imposture in calculating at only 100 millions the innumerable expenses of the departments. How is it possible to imagine that so small a sum can be sufficient, when we reflect that under this head are included the relief granted to the poor, the prisons, houses of correction, work-houses, and hospitals? In Great Britain, where the number of the indigent is

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\* See Chap. IX.

far smaller in proportion than in France, this class of expenses alone, including what are provided for by voluntary contribution, exceeds those of the civil government, the army, and the navy, on the peace establishment. In France, however, the legislative body have computed them at only 100 millions; and yet, in addition to what has been above stated, they have burdened that department with the expenses of the gendarmerie, engineers, central schools, salaries paid to the administrators of the departments and cantons, those of the civil, criminal, correctional, and commercial judges, and, lastly, of the justices of peace, which, it is true, amounted only to twenty-five louis each, but which it has been found necessary lately to augment. The Directory, when applying for this increase, computed it at four millions; a request which the Councils could not, with any decency, refuse, after having so generously raised their own salaries, though already so exorbitant. Thus they acquiesce in the following observation of Barennes: "Like every old and corrupt nation, we have many factitious wants. We must not then treat our public functionaries like citizens of *Sparta*."

Such is the outline of the innumerable expenses for which the departments must provide with the 100 millions they are authorized to levy in *additional sours, droits d'octroi, &c.*; but as they do not actually receive one fourth\* of that amount, we must not be

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\* It was on the *droits d'octroi* established at Paris, that the department of that capital chiefly relied for their local expenses, which require between sixteen and seventeen millions of livres. It is a well-known fact, that under the old government these duties, which were then

found in the Directory declaring that the judges either neglect their offices, or *become venal*; at Garches complaining that *a great number of the sick and indigent die in the hospitals for want of bread and broth*; or at other deputies attributing the increase of robberies to the gendarmerie being obliged to *do their duty on foot*. With regard to the other public works, the minister of the interior presented the following picture of their disorganization, in one of his last circular letters:—"Almost every branch of the public service in the communes is at a stand. In one place there are fountains to reconstruct; in another, the pavements are so much out of repair, that carriages cannot pass; and in a third, the houses and public buildings are falling to decay, and the streets are no longer lighted \*."

By these few facts we may judge how insufficient 100 millions would be to provide for this class of expenditure. Nor can it escape anyone, that it is chiefly to the system of political equality that we must attribute this deficiency. That system is the most ruinous that can exist, chiefly because, in order to prevent its being overturned by the aristocracy of riches, it is indispensably necessary to allow the public functionaries

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called *droits d'entrée* produced about thirty-six millions. This sum was divided between the royal treasury and that of the city. On re-establishing them towards the end of the year 1798, they were estimated at nearly nine millions; but Bailleul has declared, in the sitting of the 30th April, that *their produce is continually diminishing, and that they will only yield 5,706,000 livres*. Should this prove true, it will enable us to form an idea of the boasted riches of Paris, of which we are told, the outrageous luxury invites and challenges taxation.

\* See the *Moniteur* of the 29th January 1799, No. 130.

a sufficient salary to insure them a suitable maintenance, and that from the time they enjoy the dignity of representing the people, they should constantly insist that they ought not to be treated like *citizens of Sparta*.

This surely is sufficient to convince us that the ordinary and extraordinary expenses of the republic require a *milliard* (forty millions sterling); and their best financiers even estimated them higher three years ago. But when they perceived the impossibility of providing for such a sum, they discovered the secret of reducing it, by a stroke of the pen, to 825 millions; Let us confine ourselves for the present to comparing the amount of the *real* receipts, with these 825 millions of *presumptive* receipts.

In their message of the 2d February 1799, the Directory announced, that during the first quarter of the current year, the total receipts amounted to 99,971,728 livres; nor do the documents they have furnished leave any reasonable doubt of this first assertion. But what can we think of that which accompanied it?—*thus it appears*, say they, *that on comparing the receipts and expenses of the first quarter, there is a deficit of 43,778, 262 livres.*

It requires but little skill in calculation to perceive, that if 825 millions were indispensably necessary to the French government, and if they had only received 100 during the first three months, the deficit for that quarter was not forty-three millions, but  $106\frac{1}{4}$ , or 425 millions *per annum*.

The following will furnish us with a key to these juggling contrivances. For reasons which will here-

after appear, the Directory did not take notice in this account, either of the deficit on the additional subsidy of 125 millions, of which they have as yet received nothing\*; or of that on the 100 millions of departmental receipts; or, lastly, of that on the twenty-five millions to be levied by means of turnpikes†. It was by entirely omitting these three ar-

\* It will be remembered, they were authorized to raise them on the refuse of the national domains, which were, for this purpose, wrested from the creditors of the state, to whom they had recently been assigned, after retaining ten millions for the ordinary expenses of the year VII. In his message of the 28th April 1799, the minister of finance declares, that the sales made in conformity to the laws of the 30th September and 24th November 1797, have as yet brought in only thirty millions: and as this is precisely the complement of the two sums appropriated out of these sales to the ordinary expenses of the years VI. and VII. it follows, that no part of the extraordinary subsidy of 125 millions, which the Directory demanded *to be very speedily advanced in specie and effective value*, has been paid into the treasury.

At the time, however, when this extraordinary subsidy was decreed, Ramel appeared so fully convinced of the possibility of realizing it, that he immediately wrote as follows to all the central administrations of the republic: *Those who command the forces with which we are going to fight, rely on the impoverishment of our finances: they will be DECEIVED. They hope for victories: they will be VANQUISHED.*

Thus, since the fall of their paper circulation, the progress of the Directory in their finances, in some measure resembles the triumphant marches of their generals; who, ever since the renewal of hostilities, constantly boast of gaining victories, while they have as constantly been retreating and losing ground.

† As the expense of keeping up the roads, for which this sum was intended to provide, is also computed at twenty-five millions in the estimate of 600 millions of national expenditure, it has been omitted in both accounts when the object of discussion was to determine the amount of the deficit: and hence it is, that whenever the budget of the current year is quoted, its amount is only stated as 575 millions.

I should scarcely have been able to discover the motive of this *erratum*, had not François de Neufchateau had the folly to betray it in his circular of the 6th March, wherein he informs us, that *the expenses of the first establishment of the turnpikes have absorbed its produce*; whence it appears, that it is to *absorb* these twenty-five millions of

ticles that they reduced the expected receipts of the year to 575 millions. And as they had received nearly 100 millions during the first three months, we ought not to be surprised if, in that space of time, they only perceived an arithmetical deficit of about forty-three millions. But it is useless to insist on this first miscalculation, which is but trifling, compared with those we shall presently discover.

Before we take notice of these, we must pause, and consider a fact contained in the same message of the Directory, and which would scarcely appear credible, were it not confirmed by other authentic documents; I mean, that nearly fifty-two of the hundred millions received during the first quarter arose from the land and mobiliary taxes, both for the current year and for the arrears. So great a receipt within so short a space of time, can only be accounted for by the two following circumstances, which are by no means likely to be repeated during the three last quarters. First, the autumnal quarter we are now speaking of (October, November, and December, 1798), is that in which the farmers sell their crops, and are therefore accustomed to pay their contributions, or, at least, a considerable portion of them. Secondly, that the insurrection in the Low Countries, and the presence of the French troops, enabled the Directory to complete and extend the institution of *garnisers*. These flying troops had orders to over-

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deficit that the government have taken the tardy resolution of separating the article of turnpikes both from the receipts and expenditures that have already taken place.

run the country, and carry off hostages chosen from among the rich farmers, who were kept in prison until the villages had paid off all their arrears \*. This new mode of fiscal extortion explains why the receipts during the first quarter amounted to 100 millions. We will now proceed to the second.

The minister Ramel, when giving an account of it on the 24th April, did not think proper to separate the receipts for the two first quarters. He contented himself with saying, that the receipts of the first half year amounted to the sum of 161,787,051 livres. But although he purposely confounded the receipts of these six months, we need only compare this report with the preceding, to satisfy ourselves, that although the first quarter had produced 100 millions, the second only yielded sixty-one, and that consequently the receipts of the latter fell short of the former by two fifths; which furnishes us with an arithmetical proof, that the pecuniary resources of the Directory diminish in the same proportion with the increase of their expenditure.

Besides, this little finesse of blending the receipts of the six first months, the better to conceal the rapid progress of the deficit, will appear very innocent when compared with that which I am about to mention.

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\* See the *Moniteur* of the 5th February, wherein it is said, that towards the end of the preceding month a great number of citizens, taken as hostages from different country communes, to serve as pledges for the complete payment of all the direct taxes, have been set at liberty, the arrears having been entirely paid off.

These *lettres de cachet*, which the treasury send forth to seize as hostages certain rich farmers, without investigating whether they are individually in arrears or not, are called securities (*mises en sureté*).



We have already seen, that when the Directory declared that the receipts of the first quarter amounted to 100 millions, they stated the deficit on that quarter at forty-three. What then can we think of the effrontery of their minister, who, when now disclosing, that the receipts of the second quarter were only sixty-one millions, adds, in a whining tone of lamentation, *the result is, that the deficit, concerning the amount of which so many disputes have taken place, is; for the YEAR VII. 66,543,037 livres?*

A *deficit*, however, being the difference between the actual and presumptive receipts, we need but understand addition and subtraction, to be satisfied, that since the French government expected 825 millions within the year, and have only received 161 during the first six months, even if we suppose the other six to produce an equal sum, they will have a *deficit* to provide for, not of sixty, but 503 millions.

To perform this grand shuffling trick, Ramel had only to add, that he *hoped* to receive during the present half year 346,669,912 livres. The miraculous accuracy of the sums which he *hopes* for, will, no doubt, appear very astonishing; but, what is still more so is, that he *hopes* it only because the direct taxes may now be paid with the eighty-nine millions of *bons* which he is delivering to the one hundred and sixty thousand stockholders and pensioners of the state. But as these *bons*, when returned into the national treasury, become totally useless, this return will occasion a further deficiency of eighty-nine millions; for the arrangement he has made with the creditors of the republic swells the receipts only upon

paper, and is the same as if he had said to them, *Pass your dividends to profit and loss, and I will do the same with your direct taxes.*

Thus all the castles in the air of this ministerial quack rest upon his *hope* of receiving, during the last half year, twice as much money as in the preceding; and so *strong* is the foundation of his *hopes*, that they rest entirely on the second quarter having produced two fifths less than the first!

Incredible as it may appear, the vexation this minister felt at being unable to conceal this vast diminution, induced him to tell the nation, they *impoverished* themselves by not paying the necessary taxes. If this be true, they have only to let him *proceed*, and he will speedily *enrich* them.

Hitherto he has only enriched them with a brilliant *prospect* of a revenue which he *hopes* for; and what is rather singular, he seems even himself to feed upon the same airy phantom, although his contractors and the unfortunate stockholders are continually crying out—

With endless hope to view the fair  
Is little better than despair.

But what is still more singular, while this courageous financier exerted himself through patriotism to conceal near seven eighths of the enormous deficit with which he so intrepidly contends, some still more patriotic deputies accuse him of having intentionally exaggerated it, when he computed it at sixty-six millions. Malès declared it was only fifty, and Génissieux replied to Malès, that it only amounted to forty-one; Andrieux assured Génissieux that it only

amounted to fourteen; and finally, Groscaudan engaged to prove, that there was no deficit whatever. It is true, the Moniteur mentions that he was interrupted by violent murmurs, which, however, did not prevent him from ascending the tribune some days after, and declaring, that in the year VII. there will be a SURPLUS, which he computed at no less than eighty millions. His colleague Chaffet, however, at length silenced him by declaring, that there is a deficit of ONE THIRD in the receipts; and he added this remarkable sentence: 'Tis not with words that we can restore our finances—we want facts, truths, and money.—Let us not amuse the army with compliments, but pay them.

This is sufficient to show, in what inextricable labyrinth we might wander, were we to follow the financiers of the Great Nation in their estimates relative to the amount of the *presumptive* deficit, or of the receipts they *hope* for. Let us adhere to the only fact that is fully established, namely, that the treasury, during the last six months, have had at their disposal only 161 millions, which, admitting the current six months to produce an equal sum, will make their net revenue for the year, both ordinary and extraordinary, amount not to 825, but 322 millions; and their deficit to 502, or at least to 470, supposing the departmental receipts, of which the Directory never take account, to amount to thirty or thirty-two millions.

Before we quit this subject of the deficit, which the present revolutionary financiers are almost equally skilful in embroiling with their predecessors, it will

perhaps be proper to clear up the doubts which some persons entertain, who cannot conceive why the government so kindly co-operate in concealing the greater part of the deficit under which it is sinking ; and this at the very time when, as often as the Directory urge the Councils to provide for it, the latter uniformly contest its amount, or even its existence. In a word, they will say, why do not the Directory disclose to the Councils the magnitude and depth of this abyss, which threatens the latter equally with the former ?

This question Villers attempted to solve, with a simplicity which sufficiently explains the motive of all these tergiversations.

We must recollect, that although the treasury have published the total of the sums they have disbursed during the year VI. to the various ministers, not one of the latter has thought proper to state in what manner he has applied these funds, and publish his accounts, as article 308 of the constitution requires them to do. A member having lately quoted this article, saying, *The year VII. is already far advanced, and yet none of the ministers have published their accounts for the year VI.* the officious Villers rose in their defence. Let us hear what this vehement boaster of the *inexhaustible* resources of the Great Nation replied with his usual intemperance: " Representatives of the people, was it possible to publish accounts, which would only have exhibited the painful and alarming situation of the public treasury ; and which, by discovering our embarrassments, would have served to *reanimate the hopes of the enemies of our*

country; accounts that would only have shown the enormous amount of our expenses, which neither are nor can possibly be paid \* ?”

Here then, at last, the true motive appears, which influences the administration to conceal the great extent of those expenses which *they cannot possibly pay*, and that of the deficit, which it is out of their power to fill up. But this was not their only motive; they had another, somewhat less pure than the fear of reanimating the *hopes* of the combined powers †. Were they suddenly to confess a deficit of 5 or 600 millions, the evident impossibility of providing for it would throw the Councils into a state of complete discouragement, and prevent them from applying to the laying on a single additional tax; whereas, by limiting themselves at one time to pointing out a

\* See the *Moniteur* of 21st February 1799, No. 153.

† The better to prevent these *hopes* from being *reanimated*, the Directory have taken great care to urge the Councils to preserve the profoundest secrecy relative to the most alarming of their messages; but, sooner or later, they all come out through the indiscretion of some of their confidants: and thus it was, for instance, that the message of 15th December 1798 was at length made public, wherein the Directory conjured the Councils to remember, that it was the *deficit that caused the ruin of the monarchy*: a remonstrance which Lacuée thought proper to quote, to show how little it alarmed him: “It is a truth,” added he, “that the deficit was the occasional cause of the throne being destroyed; but it is not true, that it was the efficient cause. No; it was the general *hatred* for the monarchy that brought about its fall. The republic has braved every danger without bread and without finances; and the Directory now attempt to alarm us for its future existence, by talking of a deficit in the annual receipts! No; I do not participate in such weak fears. The republic is *established*—the republic will *exist*, because its basis is in the hearts of all the citizens.—The deficit, we are told, caused the ruin of the monarchy. It ought to have been said, that it was by the depredations committed on the finances, and the *incurable disease* of expending money which they had not, that the court was destroyed.

I shall leave it to the reader to determine whether the republic have not still some symptoms of this *incurable disease*.

deficit of forty millions, and at another of sixty-six, the Directory delude the Councils with an object, the latter may flatter themselves with attaining; and are always careful, at the same time, to point out such and such subjects of taxation, which, as they state, will produce the sum wanted. But scarcely is the tax decreed, before the Directory shuffle off by confessing, that the deficit was larger than they thought, or that the new tax will not yield the sum expected, and therefore that the Councils must boldly resume their work. Such, for the last six months, has been the constant practice of the Directory; and we may be confident, that until they sink beneath a rapidly increasing deficit, they will never speak but of a deficiency easily to be supplied, and that they will always have in reserve some new expedient whereby to provide for it \*.

Let us now review the vast catalogue of those which have been brought forward, since the tax on salt was repeatedly rejected through a fear of *giving*

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\* In a small work which M. F. Gentz has lately published at Berlin, on the deficit of the French republic, he has drawn a very ingenious distinction between various kinds of deficit, namely, the presumptive deficit—the actual deficit—that which does or will exist on the taxes already decreed—and that which is expected on those still remaining to be proposed and enacted. Of these deficits he speaks as follows: “When the Directory write to the two Councils, saying, *The expenditure of the current year will be 600 millions; and, as we have only a presumptive receipt of 500 millions to answer it, there remains a deficit of 100 millions to provide for; we must understand this account thus: If you will have the patriotism at this day to decree additional receipts, amounting to 100 millions, the equilibrium will (upon paper) be restored: but as for what proportion of the 600 millions already decreed may ultimately be paid to the treasury at the end of the year, this is quite another affair; and on this head we shall not fail to address you hereafter, as soon as we ourselves are informed of the amount of the real expenditure.*”

*birth to dangerous comparisons, which the enemies of the republic would not fail to point out to the people.*

To come at once to the point; some deputies, recollecting that during the reign of the assignats, neither the deficit, nor the receipts, nor the expenditure, gave them the least uneasiness, were of opinion, that nothing more salutary or efficacious could be discovered than a new paper circulation; and the idea of establishing a national bank, that might lend their notes to the government, began to gain ground in the two Councils; but Bailleul appears to have banished it for ever, by the following question, which he put on the 2d February: "Is there a Frenchman so ignorant as not to perceive, that no fictitious circulating medium whatever can *possibly* be emitted? Is there one individual among those I am addressing who can possibly doubt, from the experience we have had, that *such a circulating medium would expire even before it were born?*"

No one member having been bold enough to call up the shade of the assignats against him, the Councils very naturally recurred to the confiscations of estates, and offered to the *engagistes* (the possessors of estates granted or exchanged by the crown for two centuries past) the alternative of being immediately dispossessed of them, or engaging to pay a fourth of their value. This decree was sanctioned on the assurance, that the treasury would derive from it a sum of sixty millions. But scarcely had the minister of finances begun to collect this rich prey before he declared as follows: *The result of my investigations on this subject is far from conclusive; all my data are in-*

*finutely vague, and I know not on what sum to fix between five and fifteen millions.* To supply this new deficiency, the Council of Five Hundred no longer hesitated to lay their hands upon the estates of the Protestant clergy, who, by a kind of miracle, had escaped the destruction that fell on the Catholic church. One Couturier proposed to make a present of them to the nation, and valued them at 100 millions; but his colleague André, of the Bas-Rhin, endeavouring to parry this blow by speaking of the indemnities due to the Protestant ministers, who have generally wives and children to support, Couturier replied as follows: "Whatever be the causes that have delayed this *nationalization* (confiscation), those causes must now yield to the principles of equality we have proclaimed. These principles must no longer be merely considered as *sublime theories*, we must put them rigorously in practice. We ought to restore *en masse* to the nation what fanaticism has taken from *our ancestors* in small lots\*." This mode of resuming them *en masse* was strongly supported by Laurent, who silenced the Protestant members by the following apostrophe: "Have we then overthrown fanatical Rome, merely to confer privileges on her bastard son? I should blush at the idea."

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\* It must be observed, that the lands taken by fanaticism from their *ancestors* are those of the Augsburg and Helvetic confessions, all situated in the conquered departments on the left bank of the Rhine. But it remains to be seen, whether the Archduke will not come and interrupt these auctions, as Marshal Suwarrow has lately in the Milanese interrupted the possession of those Cisalpine citizens, who thought themselves secure and permanent proprietors of the estates of the clergy and the prince.



The Council of Five Hundred blushed at it also ; but hitherto the Council of Elders have not thought fit to sanction the decree. And here it will be proper to point out the true motive of this moderation, in order to dispel the alarms of those who are continually crying out, that the French government have still an inappretiable resource in the confiscation of estates.

The fact is, the Directory place no value on these new domains, which are continually thrown in their face whenever they apply for some permanent tax, or some extraordinary resource, that may be *speedily advanced*. And when the Councils granted them the estates of the engagistes, and, at the same time, reproached them with not proceeding with sufficient activity in disposing of the share which the nation reserved to itself out of the property of the relations of emigrants, the Directory had recourse to the popular pen of Saint-Aubin to protest against these imaginary subsidies ; and the following passage, signed by him, was inserted in the Directorial gazette ; “ It is a gross mistake to believe, that while we have national domains to sell for specie to the amount of 125 millions, and this at a time when nothing is so scarce as specie, and nothing so depreciated as lands and houses, we can, by increasing the quantity, sell to the amount of 180 millions of this class of property. So far from thereby augmenting the produce of the sales, it would be the true means of preventing them from yielding eighty millions ; and this for *two reasons* : first, because the more estates are put up for

sale, the more they are depreciated in value, and the lower they must be sold. Secondly, the more lands are confiscated, the less desirable does it appear to those who have no lands to become purchasers \*."

These *two reasons* made so strong an impression on the chairman, Malès, that in the debates of the 5th February he suffered these words to escape him :

" The more national domains you put up to sale at once, the less will they produce. If you had as many as would amount to a milliard to offer the Directory, in order to be speedily turned into money, they might undoubtedly *give them away*, but *sell* them they could not."

It was not, however, till some weeks after this ingenuous confession, that a new committee of finances proposed to open a multitude of secret wills and codicils, declaring that they *expected by these means to discover further property of emigrants*. It is true, they did not explain whether they meant to *give* them away or *sell* them ; but they were on the point of ferretting out all these inheritances, when the minister of finances endeavoured to make them renounce all these new discoveries, by declaring, in his memoir of the 28th April, the *maximum* of what could be expected from all the former. He there stated, that *the liquidation of what may be obtained from the co-proprietors of the undivided estates, held jointly with emigrants, could only be estimated at twenty-three millions*.

Affuredly it was not through any sentiment of justice or of shame, that this minister regretted hav-

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\* Rédacteur, No. 1145.

ing attempted such unproductive *liquidations*. No! if he has merely the *hopes* of eventually deriving twenty-three millions from this measure, he has a *certainty* of having lost thirty or forty on the duties of sale and transfer; since it has been attempted to enrich the exchequer by ripping up the inheritance of every republican, among whose presumptive heirs there happens to be found an emigrant royalist. At length, however, he confesses or gives to understand, that this inconsiderate decree is the chief cause of the *fall* in the price of land, and the *stagnation* of the sales\*. Nor ought we to be surprised at it: on the one hand, men do not care to purchase confiscated estates, which, when the monarchy is reinstated, will certainly be restored to the plundered families; and on the other, when they purchase patrimonial (or unconfiscated) estates, they equally fear the republican government may unexpectedly claim to be their *coproprietor*, under the pretext of having been *substituted* in the place of some emigrant who is become heir to them. The Deputy Huguet has well described the ruinous consequences of these *substitutions*, by asking, "who can purchase an estate of the relations of emigrants, or even enter into any negotiation with the best citizen, without fearing the imperceptible shares of collateral emigration?"

This single question, to which no one knew how to reply, clearly shows, that all hopes of new productive confiscations have vanished for ever from the plunderers of France; that such confiscations would

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\* Ramel's report of 24th April 1799.

only more and more dry up the sources of regular taxation; and that, as Villers has justly told them, "It is now only by TAXES that it is possible to provide for our expenditure \*."

It is subsequent to this tardy acknowledgment that his colleagues have begun to invent new taxes, and that they have successively proposed, as objects of taxation, single men, glasses placed in boudoirs, lap-dogs, hair-powder, passports, and even certificates of civism, called *cartes de sûreté*. But all these grand fiscal expedients have been successively rejected in consequence of an observation of Malèz, that *they would only produce an abundant harvest of ridicule*.

While the legislators of this nation, whose resources are *entire*, were lamenting that they could not discover any new sources of productive taxation, the Directory informed them that the tax lately laid on gateways and windows, which had at first been estimated at twenty-five millions, and afterwards at sixteen, would not produce ten. On receiving this afflicting intelligence, the Councils determined to

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\* Since this confession, which is communicated in the *Moniteur* of the 6th January 1799, No. 107, the communes having received orders to provide for the equipment of their conscripts, and to furnish each of them with thirty-five livres in money or effects; some persons have inferred, that the revolutionary financiers are again abandoning *taxation*, and going back to *requisitions in kind*. But this decree is rather a proof that they are convinced of the impossibility of at once levying taxes and requisitions; for it expressly orders the thirty-five livres to be *deducted* from the quota of each commune for the direct taxes. Hence it appears, that if these equipments have taken place, and should they amount, for instance, to three millions and a half for the 100,000 conscripts, the land-tax will produce just so much less, that sum being merely paid in advance.

quintuple the tax on coach-gateways, and double that on windows; from which, however, so little advantage has been derived, that Ramel, in his report of the 28th April, declared, that the produce of these double and quintuple taxes could only be estimated at 6,031,357 livres. The republican legislators had, however, the less reason to expect such an enormous miscalculation, as they had not made any difference between the windows of manufactories and those of the most magnificent houses; as the tax had been laid indiscriminately on inhabited and *uninhabited* houses; and, in short, as none are excepted but *huts with only one door and one window, where the miserable inhabitant shelters himself after the fatigues of a laborious day*. But it must be remembered that the huts of these miserable beings are only exempted from the increase of the tax, and not from the tax itself\*.

Scarcely had they completed the new-modelling this tax, and thus rendered it nearly impossible to be paid, before they were informed of a still greater miscalculation in their estimate of the duty on lawsuits (*droits de greffe*), which Légier had engaged should not produce less than twenty millions†. Malès having announced on the 28th January, that, *every thing taken into account, their committee could scarcely believe this object would yield three millions*, they determined, on the 2d of March, to triple the rate of this new tax.

As they had only laid it, however, on those who plead before the civil and commercial tribunals, it

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\* Moniteur of the 5th March 1799 No. 165.

† Moniteur of the 25th June 1798, No. 277.

could not be liable to much blame, were it not an open violation of the *great charter* of the constitution, which promised to the French nation that justice should be administered *gratuitously* to the people, though they are now obliged to pay for it, even previous to being allowed to appear before the judge.

But what shall we think of the new tax which remains to be mentioned? Can it be believed that the two Councils have recently decreed, almost unanimously, that henceforward *the expenses of law proceedings shall be levied on the property of the persons condemned by the criminal, correctional, and police tribunals?*

It is certain that the increase of robberies has rendered these expenses enormous, since the legislators of the Great Nation have given their countrymen the title of the *regenerated* nation; but it is more than doubtful, whether the property of the condemned criminals will ever pay the hundredth part of the amount. In vain did the Deputy Goutret acknowledge, in the sitting of the 7th April, that " he had long been a member of a criminal tribunal, and that out of 500 persons condemned, he had scarcely known *three* able to pay the expense of the proceedings." But he was answered, that " a criminal declares war against society, and owes it indemnities." Upon this, the levying these indemnities was immediately decreed.

Had the Council, in order to deter men from crimes by the fear of punishment, left it at the discretion of the judges whether or not to confiscate the property of the convicts, such a law would neither

have been without example, nor, perhaps, destitute of utility : but it was without example to make it a financial resource. Never was a decree more calculated to leave the unfortunate malefactor's widow and children, who will be driven perhaps by misery to the highway, no other resource than theft, by tearing from them their wretched bed at the very moment when they hear the sentence which leads their father to the scaffold.

This expedient would perhaps be the most extraordinary that ever appeared in the fiscal code of any nation, had not the minister of finances discovered a still more productive resource. He has lately put up to sale, throughout France, all those cross and bye roads which lie *convenient* for the proprietors of the adjacent estates. After having so well succeeded in rendering the roads impassable, it is the less surprising that, under pretext of *restoring them to agriculture*, he should find it more convenient to sell them for the *benefit* of the exchequer, than to repair them. But what can be better calculated than this new auction, to complete the picture of the *inexhaustible resources of the Great NATION* \* ?

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\* See the Redacteur of the 13th April, No. 1213 ; containing a letter, in which Ramel desires every central administration to send him an account of the *bye-roads that may be broken up* within their jurisdiction, to *put them up to auction*, and to furnish him, as soon as possible, an estimate of the sum these sales are likely to produce. " It is necessary," he writes, " that the cross-roads, the *inutility* of which may appear a sufficient reason for their being broken up, should be restored to agriculture. But it does not follow, that the nation ought thus gratuitously to sacrifice the public property, which, on the contrary, is to be sold for their benefit.—I presume that, in general, the owners of the adjacent estates will be more desirous of purchasing these roads than any other persons; and in

Such was the last expedient adopted by the Directory, when the assassination of their plenipotentiaries at Rastadt furnished them with a very plausible pretext to renew their demands for money. This pretext was seized with avidity; and in the message, in which they called for vengeance from the Councils, they took care to add, " that, to render this vengeance *prompt and terrible*, they must, before all things, restore the *equilibrium between the receipts and the expenditure*."

Of the fifteen confidential members who had set down their names to speak upon this message, Sherlock was the first who ascended the tribune, where he had scarcely pronounced the words "*Generous manes of Roberjot, be pacified; vengeance is preparing for you*;" before he was interrupted by a multitude of voices crying out, "*Bayonets, bayonets!*" The speaker, after waiting in vain for some one of the Directorial party to utter the word which was the object of his speech, as well as of the message; namely, *taxes*; was obliged to pronounce it himself, and exclaimed, "*I send forth the idea of a war-tax*." Those who had interrupted him by invoking the vengeance of bayonets, knew not what to oppose to this *idea*, which having been referred to a committee of seven, the Council rose,

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*fact the soil that is thus to be sold is particularly convenient for them," &c.*

It is remarkable that this appeared to him so happy a thought, that he was unwilling to throw away a single moment in soliciting a decree to enforce it; or at least considered himself as sufficiently authorized to adopt that measure by the law, which permits him to dispose of the moveable property belonging to the nation (*mobilier national*), upon the best conditions that can be obtained.



amidst cries, a thousand times repeated, of, *Vengeance, vengeance, against the infamous House of Austria* \* !

Bertier was appointed to draw up this new report; and although he acknowledged, that the *existing resources are not in equilibrium with the public emergencies, and that, in the war department, the whole is almost expended at the end of the eighth month*; yet he added, that it was problematical whether the deficit would amount to sixty-six millions. But it did not appear to him at all problematical, whether it was possible to provide for it immediately by an addition of ten *per cent.* on most of the taxes, even on the duty on sales and transfers, and the stamp-duties, the produce of which has diminished so considerably since their rates have been raised. The only exception he proposed was that on gateways, which had lately been *quintupled*, and which he now again caused to be *doubled*; so that it has been raised, within a few decades, to *ten times* its former amount, and this even before the first tax had been assessed, so as to make trial of it.

But of all the articles taxed, that on which Bertier reckons most, and which he estimates at thirty-six millions, is an increase of ten *per cent.* on the land-tax, and on the personal and mobiliary taxes: though, in

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\* See the account of this memorable sitting in the *Moniteurs* of the 9th, 10th, and 11th May, Nos. 231, 232, and 233; containing, 1st. the speech of Décomberousse, who observed, that *the cabinet of Austria is a calamity to Europe*; 2d. the address of the French government to all nations and governments, to demand *a union of execration against the House of Austria*; and, lastly, this flourish of Garat, *Can victory be long uncertain or wavering?—No; I attest even our DEFEATS, those DEFEATS wherein our soldiers have surpassed, have effaced all the most illustrious achievements that have from century to century emblazoned the annals of courage.*

the budget of the current year, these three contributions had been reduced by almost double that sum, and this at the express desire of the Directory, who urged the Councils to open their eyes to the *extreme surcharge* of the direct taxes, and to diminish the rate of them, in order to *increase their produce*: a very wise suggestion, and in which they were supported and even anticipated by Brissé; who had told the Councils, that the infallible consequence of too heavy a tax is, *that not even that portion of it which might be borne is paid* \*.

The Council of Elders, notwithstanding their abhorrence for *direct* taxes, have at length been tired out, and consented to this addition *en masse*; the produce of which will soon make them understand what Dean Swift meant when he said, that in the arithmetic of finances two and two do not always make four, and that sometimes they only make one.

We must, however, do these worthy people the justice to say, that on this last occasion they have given an example of personal sacrifices, by subjecting themselves to a deduction of one tenth on the excess of their indemnities above 3000 livres; an act of generosity which would have done them more honour, had they not some days before augmented them  $1\frac{3}{4}$  *per cent.* by signifying to the treasury, that they intend to be paid, not in *livres* tournois, but in *francs*. This small clandestine increase, however, is but a trifle, compared with the million they voted themselves in October 1797, as a compensation for

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\* Moniteurs of 4th June and 12th August 1798, No. 256 and 323.

giving up the privilege of franking, and the three millions they last year added to their indemnities, which are thus doubled, in lieu of being diminished a fourth, as the constitution would require, in consequence of the fall in the price of corn.

But what will the Directory think, when they perceive that the Councils have found no other subsidy worth offering them, than an order to give up a tenth of their salaries, and the re-establishment of the *surcharge* on the direct taxes, from which they had themselves conjured the legislative body to relieve the people, and that merely in order to increase the revenue? No doubt the Directory will soon have occasion to suggest some other *war-tax*, more adapted to supporting the expenses of the campaign.

Nothing can be more easy than to decree some extraordinary tax; the only difficulty is, how to levy it without proportionally diminishing the produce of the ordinary taxes. In a word, the whole question reduces itself to this; Is it possible, by any means whatever, to extort from this impoverished and exhausted people a net annual revenue of more than 320 millions, which is above one third of their taxable income? Affuredly, even should the present rulers of France increase the land-tax in a ten-fold ratio, like that on gateways; should they put up to sale not only the cross-roads, but also the highways, and the whole territory of France; we may defy them to raise more than one million a day; and I flatter myself I have proved, that even this sum would still leave a daily deficit to contend with, of at least two millions of livres.

No wonder then if the alarms of these proud republicans are increasing in proportion to the progress of their deficit and their expenditure. The greater part, both of their late debates and publications\*, turn entirely on the distress of the national treasury; and even the most short-sighted begin to discover, that this is the rock on which they are destined to split: *Let us remember*, says Regnier, *let us remember, that Pitt has declared, France can only be vanquished by her finances* †.

I do not, however, remember having ever read any such *declaration* in the speeches of Mr. Pitt; and we must confess, that such a prediction, had he uttered it, would have been already falsified by the hero of Austria, and the conqueror of the invincible army of Italy. But I well remember, that at the time when the revolutionary financiers were terrifying all Europe by boasting of their *colossal fortune*, Mr. Pitt declared, *that this colossal fortune of assignats and confiscations was but a GIGANTIC SWINDLING TRICK*; that being founded in robbery, it would soon crumble away of itself, and only leave that credulous and criminal nation the anguish of remorse and the pangs of misery; that if the coalesced powers had but perseverance enough to go on till that event take place;

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\* Citizen Petit, one of the best writers of republican France, has inserted in the *Moniteur* of 3d January a short dissertation on the *finances*, in which he goes still further than Saint-Aubin: he says, *Those are the true FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE who consider the ruin of the finances as the principle of social dissolution*. If this is true, I think I could point out the true friend of the great, or rather of the only nation, as Bailleul, endeavouring to outdo Bonaparte, has lately styled the French.

† *Moniteur* of 19th February 1799, No. 151.

if they continue to unite; in short, if they imitate Great Britain in making such warlike efforts as are proportioned to the formidable extent of the danger, the regular, and consequently durable display of the financial resources of the belligerent powers, would have a most striking influence on the ultimate issue of this grand struggle.

This influence becomes daily more conspicuous; and every one may now anticipate the brilliant prospect that opens before the coalesced powers, if they determine not to lay down their arms till they have torn from this military republic all its conquests without exception; or if they take proper measures to reduce it by EXHAUSTION, in case it cannot be done by force of arms. And even should it be necessary, in pursuit of this grand object, patiently to suffer some further misfortunes, and carry on several more campaigns, what true friend to peace would consent to lose the fruits of so many sacrifices by refusing to prolong them till that success is attained, without which Europe can neither enjoy peace nor civilization? But this monster in politics is already approaching its dissolution; and perhaps the day is not far distant, when those who once believed in the inexhaustible resources of crimes, and in its permanent triumph, will see it expiated by the exemplary catastrophe of that government of regicides. Who knows but the impious president of the Directory may already have opened, though without being aware of it, the decrees of that Divine Providence whom he meant to blaspheme, when he said a few months ago to his accomplices, *Before the seventh*

*year of the republic shall have brought on the anniversary of this festival (the 10th August), the day of vengeance will come; and PROVIDENCE WILL BE JUSTIFIED\*.*

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## POSTSCRIPT.

June 20, 1799.

SINCE the above was written, many important facts and confessions have come out, which show that the late defeats of the French have, in a great degree, arisen from the exhaustion of their finances; which have neither admitted of their provisioning places of retreat in time, of their completing the recruiting of the armies, of remounting the cavalry, nor even of providing the sum necessary for their pay; which the army of Italy complained of not having received when the campaign opened. The same Garat, who appealed to their *defeats* as pledges of future *victories*, had shortly before shown somewhat more foresight, when, abandoning predictions, and confining himself to facts, he said, on the 14th February 1799, "I speak of what I have seen, and I have seen every where throughout Italy, that our means are terribly disproportioned to our enterprises. I have seen our armies in want of soldiers, and our soldiers in want of every thing requisite for armies."

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\* Speech of President Merlin on 10th August 1798.

It is to be observed, that a few days after this speech, the antithesis of which, no doubt, made him forget its imprudence, this eye-witness of the privations of the army of Italy applauded, in unison with all his colleagues, at the renewal of hostilities; the message announcing which was only interrupted by unanimous cries of *Vive la republique !* A few months before, the late Director Carnot, though exiled by the Councils; had, however, the generosity to warn them of the dreadful consequences of a new war, which he foretold would be the surest means of *again rendering the existence of the republic a problem*; and although its duration never has been a very difficult *problem* to those who know the French, and reflect upon their history, it is certain, that to recommence the war without finances, was wantonly to accelerate the dissolution of this problematical republic. It was in the character of one of its founders that he declared to the new leaders, *that it was on the verge of ruin, unless they speedily opened their eyes to the situation of the finances, and perceived that a state, whatever be its constitution, cannot possess stability, unless there be an equilibrium between the display of its strength and the reproduction of its resources.* He even added, that “ though, since the treaty of Campo Formio, the French armies had no longer been at war with the great powers, he was convinced they would be reduced at the end of the campaign (that of 1798) to about one half of their former numbers.”

At that very time I was urging precisely the same opinion, and I endeavoured to show, that no confi-

dence whatever could be placed in the army-list which Scherer, the minister at war, used from time to time to publish, in order to persuade the coalesced powers, that the republican army *actually amounted* to above 400,000 men.

No one member of the Councils was the dupe of these hyperboles; for they well knew that the pretended *effective credits* which they granted this minister, would scarcely suffice for the maintenance of 100 or 150,000 men. Yet they now pretend to call him to an account for his *exaggeration* with regard to the number of the troops, which, just before the declaration of war with Austria, he stated to amount to 337,000 men. Among other things Berlier reproaches him with having there represented the cavalry as consisting of 68,000 men, whereas to make up that number, it would have been necessary to purchase 40,000 horses. If this is true, and if the cavalry are really reduced to *perform their service on foot*, like the *maréchaussée*, not only this new species of deficit accounts for the present superiority of the coalesced armies, by very natural causes, but it insures them future successes.

In truth, we scarcely know whether we ought to feel most disgusted at the base hypocrisy or the ignorant stupidity of the French financiers, who have only supplied the government with 161 millions during six months, and who accuse them, as of a crime, for not being able, with so trifling a sum, at once to provide for their own devouring *indemnities*, the purchase of 40,000 horses, and the maintenance of 337,000 men under arms.

But what crowns this instance of hypocrisy and



injustice, the Council of Five Hundred, not content with accusing the minister of these mis-statements, have, on the 6th of June, addressed a most threatening message to the government, in which they say, "Citizens Directors, every thing announces that the safety of the nation is threatened from *without*, and that in this the *internal* tranquillity may be involved. Under these circumstances, we have a right to expect the *communications* required to be made to us by the constitution."

The Directory, however, will no doubt reply, if, in so critical a moment, they can continue tolerably collected, that if the safety of the nation is threatened from *without*, the Councils must attribute it to the renewal of the war, which they themselves provoked to the utmost of their power, declaring it was the only means of putting the finances *in the road to melioration*. The Directory will not fail to add, that the legislative body, who so unanimously applauded this measure, have, with equal unanimity, rejected every productive tax that has been proposed for carrying it on. As to the *communications* which the Council of Five Hundred accuse them of withholding, the Directory will appeal to the innumerable messages, wherein, ever since the annihilation of the assignats and mandates, they have been continually repeating, that *the receipts are daily becoming more and more insufficient for the various branches of the public service*; that the *deficit* is an abyss into which the republic will fall; and that it is condemned to perish, like the monarchy, *by the exhaustion of the finances*. They will point out, that the *internal* disorganization of the country arises from

the impossibility of either paying the public functionaries, or finding men who are able and willing to discharge those offices gratuitously: and as to the defeats the armies have met with *abroad*, they will undertake to prove, that the Councils might have avoided, and might still repair them, by procuring sufficient funds for remounting the cavalry, and provisioning and paying the troops. In short, they will not fail to repeat, that with *money* the republic may be saved. But it remains to be seen, whether they will still dare also to repeat that *its resources are entire*.

Such, probably, will this new *communication* be; and such would be a sufficient reply to the very indiscreet questions contained in the following address of the inhabitants of Grenoble, read in the sitting of the 15th May: "Legislators and Directors, how is it, that in our camps the *desertion* of the troops is almost universal, and that the seventh military division is not even strong enough to seize and arrest the deserters? How is it that the military administrations are rolling in money, while the troops are left *utterly destitute*; inasmuch that the conscripts who arrived at Milan, found neither bread to eat nor straw to lie on, and thus their *desertion was provoked?*"

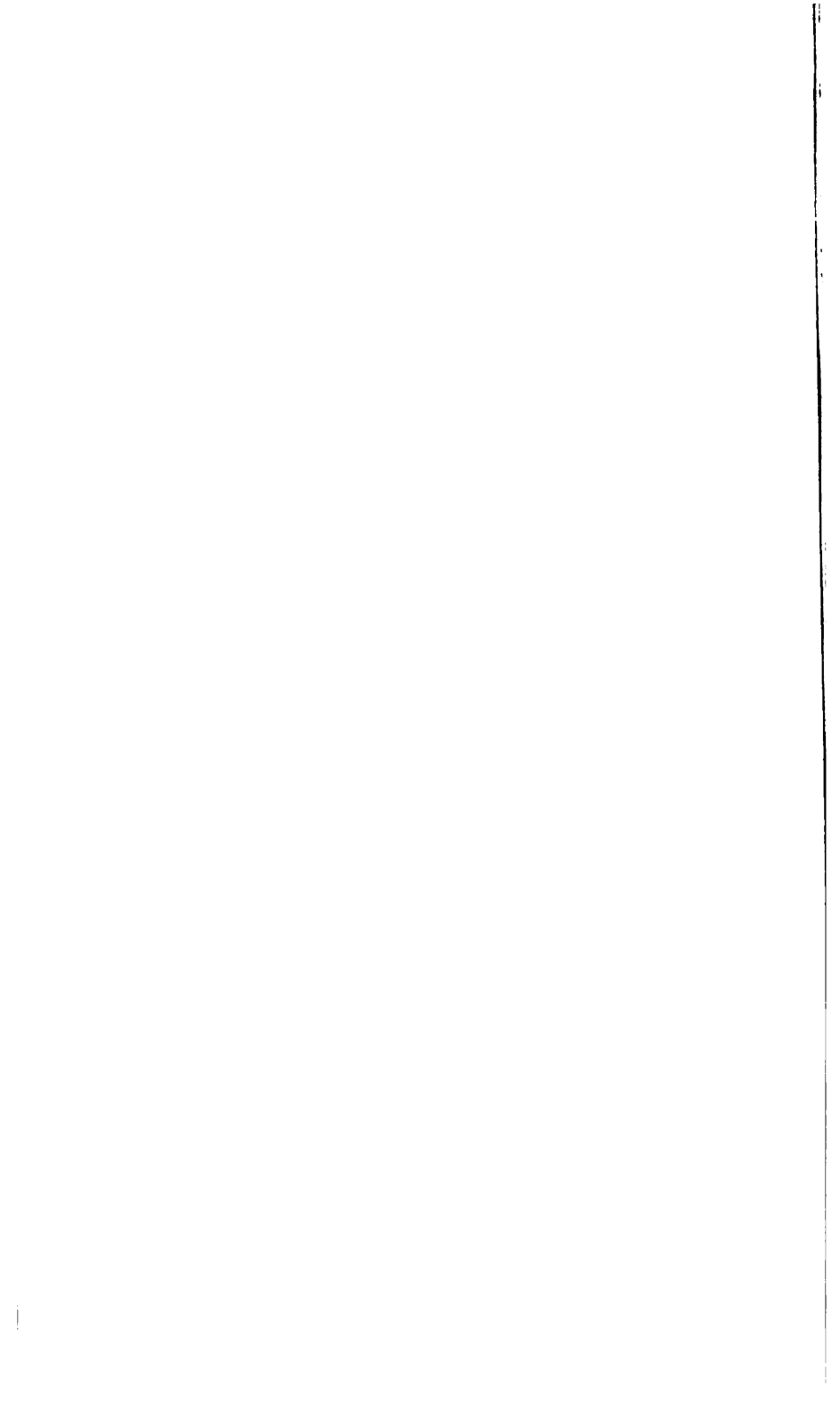
This address having been publicly read and sent to the Directory, the inhabitants of Grenoble entered into a further correspondence with the president of the Council of Five Hundred; and on the 6th June addressed a second dispatch to him, in which they say, "The wounded soldiers who have returned from the army, and the conscripts who happen to be sick, are left without succour, the hospitals being unprovided with every thing necessary for their comfort.—The

despondency is so general, that there is reason to fear a speedy and *absolute disorganization*.

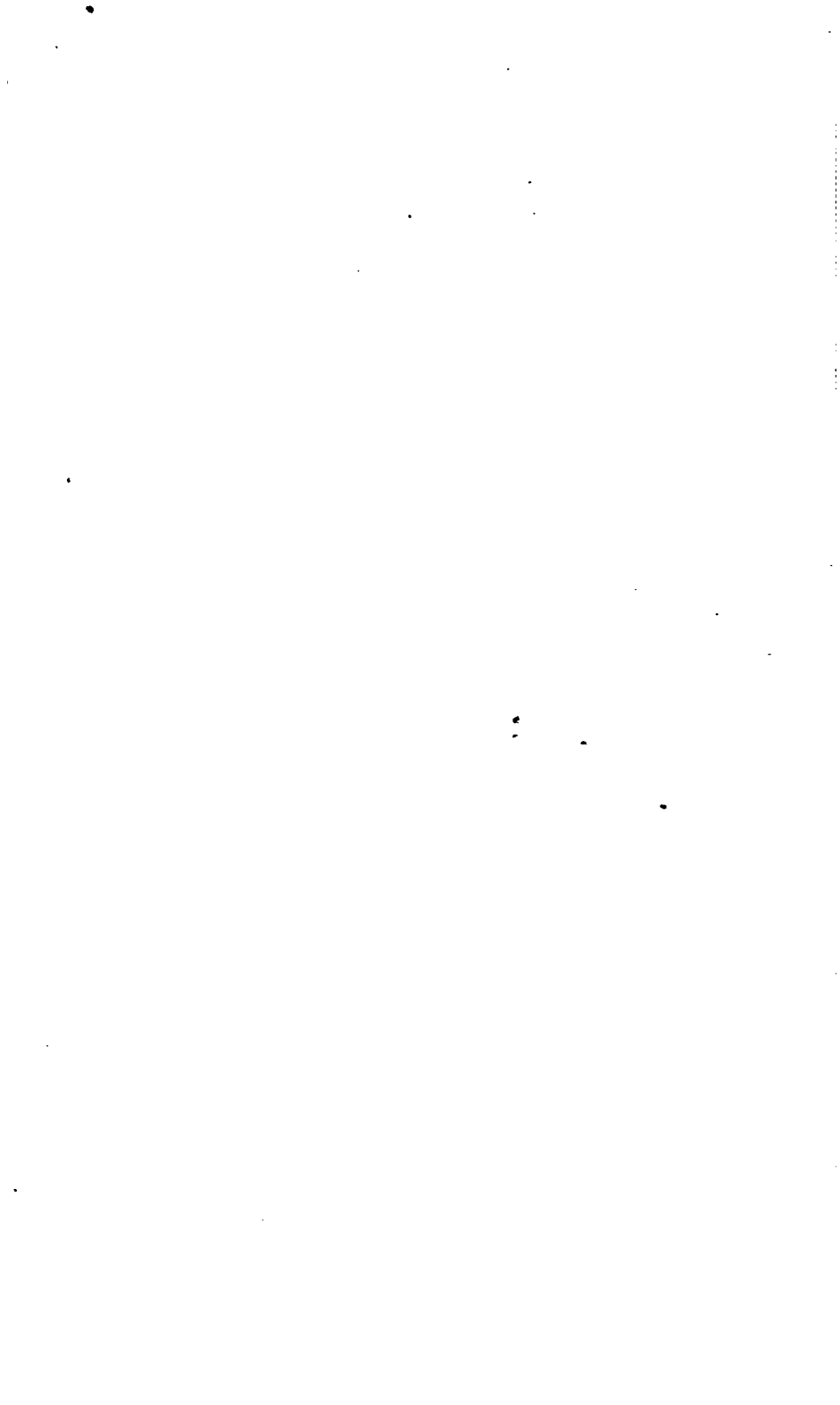
“ If, however,” added these warm patriots, “ the administrations and generals of the interior had *money* at their disposal, they might yet provide for the most pressing wants: but *without resources* what can be undertaken, what can be done? nothing but acts of *despair*: and you know, Citizens Legislators, that despair leads to the *most dreadful catastrophes*.”

If this be so, I was not far wrong, when, four years ago, I ventured to predict, that when the French government should be no longer possessed of a paper circulating medium, when their neighbours should no longer suffer themselves to be pillaged with impunity by their armies, the *desertion* of the republican troops would be *provoked* by the *utterly destitute* condition to which they would infallibly be reduced; that their leaders being then left without *money* or *resources*, and nothing being done to relieve their most pressing wants, *despair* would *shortly* lead them to what they would call the *most dreadful catastrophe*, to that of the *imperishable republic perishing by the exhaustion of the finances*. I still persist with increasing confidence in this conjecture, though still adding the same indispensable condition with which I set out, namely, that the death of the monster depends, above all things, on *the allies persisting in the war, and on the extent of their sacrifices to prevent the republican armies from seizing the resources of one conquered country after another, in order thereby still to grasp at the resources of other nations*.









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